

THE HARVEST IS IN (...and pert' near gone!)

Seed producers' hopes for a harvest of plenty were altered by weather, lower production and strong demand.

by Terry McIver, associate editor

A Boy Scout would have a field day as a grass seed grower or marketer. He'd always have to "be prepared."

Heavy demand and fickle weather conditions contributed to a less-than-anticipated 1989 harvest for many seed varieties, most notably tall fescues.

Last year it was the drought. This year rain was plentiful, but at the wrong times.

"All the fescues are low," says **Doug Toews** of International Seeds. "The weather did it. We had the cold spell in December, then little rain, then lots of rain, and some more rain at harvest time. It was six of one, half-a-dozen of another."

'The demand for tall fescue is as hot as ever! Industry-wide, it's been... spotty, production, increased demand and weather.'

—Joe Churchill
Northrup King

Also, field burning was interrupted for several days in 1988 after the I-5 accident, and some think the interruption ultimately caught up with production.

Tall fescues hardest hit

Turf-type tall fescues took a real beating this time around.

"We think it was a number of weather-related factors," says **Mike Robinson**, president of Seed Research of Oregon. "There was late rain in November, a late green-up, and then the cold weather in February. And after the cold spell, wet weather held up fertilizing in February."

Though fertilizing schedules might differ slightly among growers,



TURF-TYPE TALL FESCUE

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Adventure	Warren's	C
Apache	Turf Seed	B-
Arid	Jacklin/Olsen-Fennel/ Northrup King	B/C/B
Avanti	Warren's	C
Bonanza	Olsen-Fennel/Proprietary/ Van Der Have	C/C/C
Bonsai (dwarf)	Turf Merchants	C
Brookston	Turf Merchants	C
Chesapeake	O.M. Scott	B
Chieftan	Roberts	C
Cimarron	Lesco	B
Clemfline	Lofts Great Western	A
Cochise (dwarf)	Ampac	S
Crossfire	Pickseed	C
Emperor	Zajac Performance Seeds	C
Falcon	Olsen-Fennel/E.F. Burlingham	C/S
Finelawn I	Fine Lawn Research	C
Gala	International	C
Galway	Northrup King	C
Guardian	Roberts	C
Houndog	International	B-
Hubbard	Hubbard Seed & Supply	C
HRZ-18	Van Der Have	C
Jaguar	Zajac Performance Seeds	C
Jaguar II	Zajac Performance Seeds	C
Maverick	Pickseed	B
Maverick II	Pickseed	B
Mesa	Jonathan Green	B
Mojave	Olsen-Fennel	C
Monarch	Turf Seed	B-
Montauk	Jonathan Green	C
Murietta (dwarf)	Turf Seed	C
Mustang	Turf Seed	B-
Olympic	Turf Seed	B-
Pacer	International	B-
Potomac	Jonathan Green	C
Rebel	Lofts Great Western	B
Rebel II	Lofts Great Western	B
Rebel Jr.	Lofts Great Western	C
Richmond	Jonathan Green	B
Silverado (dwarf)	Turf Seed	C
Shortstop	Pickseed	C
Survivor (blend)	Seed Research	B
Sundance (dwarf)	Turf Merchants	C
Taurus (dwarf)	Turf Merchants	C
Team (blend)	Pickseed	B
Thoroughbred	Pickseed	B
Titan	Seed Research	B
Trailblazer	Lesco	B
Triathalawn (blend)	Turf Seed	B-
Tribute	Lofts Great Western	B
Trident	Seed Research/Ampac	B/S
Triple Pro (blend)	Northrup King	B
Trophy (blend)	Seed Research	B
Turfgem II (blend)	Turf Merchants	A
Turf Mates (dwarf blend)	Turf Merchants	C
Winchester	E.F. Burlingham & Sons	S
Wrangler	Lesco/Jacklin/Turf Merchants	C/C/C
SR 8200 (dwarf)	Seed Research	C

Robinson says those who were able to fertilize well in February had the best yields.

"We expect the 1989 tall fescue crop to fall short of the demand, a demand that is constantly increasing as users realize the advantage of turf-types over the older, forage-type tall fescues," says **Art Wick**, director of research and development for Lesco. Wick says grower costs have increased more than costs for the 1988 crop, which should reflect in somewhat higher professional user prices this fall. According to Wick, future turf-type tall fescue demand is difficult to measure, but Lesco expects to see a growing demand for several years.

The demand for tall fescues has been "as hot as ever," says **Joe Churchill** of Northrup King. "Some (of our) varieties in some areas have had winter damage in February. Galway was effected, but Arid is okay. Industry-wide, it's been a combination of spotty production, increased demand and weather."

"Our tall fescue supplies are adequate, but adequate isn't good enough," remarks **Gary Parker**, general manager of Lofts. Our older stands were primarily weak. It's weather related, fertilizer related... we don't have the answer."

On the plus side, Parker says new fields planted a year ago should help ease any pending shortages next year.

Gayle Ward of Jacklin Seed Co. finds the tall fescues very disappointing, with a 50 percent yield reduction. And **Tom Stanley** of Turf Seed sees many tall fescue yields as 30 to 50 percent short. The especially cold winter was something Stanley and others think may have been another negative factor.

Add to that a heavy demand. "There are more certified production acres of tall fescue than perennial ryegrass in Oregon," says **Steve Tubbs**, vice president and general manager of Turf Merchants, Inc. However, demand for tall fescue is keeping supplies tight. "All tall fescues are yielding poorly due to reproductive tillers turning vegetative rather than producing seed heads," continues Tubbs, "and clean-outs are higher than expected due to empty florets."

"Regardless of demand, there is a virtual sell-out of all varieties at prices comparable to last year. In fact, it's the first time in history that the turf types have raised the price of Kentucky-31 as opposed to Kentucky-31 pulling the price of turf types down," says Tubbs.

Due to excellent demand for pe-

KENTUCKY BLUEGRASS

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY	VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
A-34 Ben Sun	Waren's	C	Haga	E.F. Burlingham & Sons	B
Abbey	O.M. Scott	B	Harmony	Seed Research	B
Able 1	Warren's	C	Huntsville	Jacklin	B
Adelphi	Jacklin/Northrup King	C/C	Ikone	International	C
Alpine	Pickseed	B	Julia	Turf Seed/Lesco	B/B
Amazon	Jacklin	C	Kelly	Northrup King	C
America	Pickseed	B	Liberty	Zajac Performance Seeds	C
Aspen	Northrup King	B	Limousine	Roberts	C
Asset	Van Der Have	C	1757	Lofts Great Western	
Aquila	Northrup King	C			
Banff	Pickseed	B	Merion	Jacklin/Roberts	C/C
Baron	Lofts Great Western	B	Midnight	Turf Seed	C
Blacksburg	Turf Seed	C	Merit	Full Circle	B
Boston	Jonathan Green	C	Minstrel	Van Der Have	C
Bristol	O.M. Scott	B	Monopoly	Peterson	C
Bronco	Pickseed	B	Nassau	Lofts Great Western/Jacklin	B/B
Challenge	Turf Seed	B	Nugget	Jacklin/Pickseed	B/B
Chateau	Fine Lawn Research	B	P-104	Lofts Great Western	C
Cheri	Olsen Fennel	C	(Princeton)		
Classic	Peterson	B	Parade	Northrup King/Van Der Have	B/C
Columbia	Turf Seed	A	Ram I	Lofts Great Western/Jacklin	B/B
Common	Full Circle	B	Rugby	Northrup King/Turf Merchants	B/C
Compact	E.F. Burlingham & Sons	C	Sophia	Van Der Have	B
Coventry	O.M. Scott	B	Suffolk	Jacklin/Lofts G. Western	B/C
Cynthia	Van Der Have	C	Sydsport	Burlingham	C
Dawn	Turf Seed/Lesco	B/B	Tendos	Turf Merchants	B
Destiny	Jonathan Green	A	Topfit	Turf Merchants	C
Eclipse	Jacklin/Zajac/Peterson	B/C/C	Topstar	Turf Merchants	C
Enmundi	Seed Research	C	Touchdown	Pickseed	B
Estate	Roberts	B	Trenton	Northrup King	B
Freedom	Jacklin	B	True Blue	Turf Merchants	A
Fylking	Jacklin	B	Victoria	O.M. Scott	B
Georgetown	Lofts Great Western	B	Wabash	Jacklin	B
Glade	Jacklin	B	Washington	Jonathan Green	C
Gnome	Turf Merchants	A	SR 2000	Seed Research	C
			SR 2100	Seed Research	C

Availability Key: A-surplus B-adequate C-limited T-testing only
S-sold out

ennial ryegrass, supplies this year of Pennant, Belle and Competitor will be limited, says **Shari Burlingham** of E.F. Burlingham & Sons. "Competitor, our new variety, will be included in our mixtures this year. We'll custom blend it to meet individual needs and requirements."

Tubbs said most of TMI's proprietary perennial ryegrasses will be in adequate supply, although the crop isn't nearly as good as 1988's—increased acreage should offset decreased yields.

This harvest yielded the first crop of Bonsai dwarf fescue, a specie that has been sparking interest throughout the industry. According to Tubbs, recent excavation of a 10-month-old Bonsai sod plot in southern California proved conclusively that Bonsai's roots extended a full six feet below the surface. "So there is no truth to the speculation that the dwarfs have shallow root systems," says Tubbs, who

believes Bonsai and similar varieties will take over the turf market west of the Mississippi due to their attractiveness as turf with drastically reduced maintenance requirements.

Bring on the blues

"The yields for proprietary bluegrasses were nothing to write home about," says Tubbs. "Most are based on the price of common bluegrasses, which is cheaper than it has been for several years and awfully strong. Fall demand will be required to keep the proprietaries from slipping. There will be some shortage of older, lower yielding varieties, but more than ample supplies overall."

Fine Lawn Research's **Bill Junk** says the Chateau Kentucky bluegrass crop will be adequate. Midnight fans will be glad to hear from Turf Seed's Stanley that recent acreage increases for Midnight should result in adequate supplies by crop year 1990.

Harry Butler, Jacklin's vice president of marketing, says there will be selected shortages on some of the lower seed-yielding varieties of proprietary Kentucky bluegrass. "There is a slight increase in acres over last year," says Butler, "however, we still do not have sufficient producing acres to meet demand. New acres have become difficult to place due to other competing commodities, such as wheat, corn and other grain products."

Says Northrup King's Churchill: "Our bluegrass yields are coming in very well at press time. We anticipate a good supply of most varieties throughout the year."

Churchill also reports adequate supplies of the "Penn Pals" bentgrasses.

Sources say most of the proprietary fine fescues grown in Oregon are disappointing contractors with both yields and clean-outs, and there is a great disparity between the common

Canadian red fescue crop and the Oregon fine fescue crop. Chewings and hard fescues could be in short supply, especially if strong demand for certified varieties from Europe

continues.

"Many factors limit successful increase in production acres," says **John Zajac** of Zajac Performance Seeds.

"Demand in most segments remains good. Therefore, I expect the higher quality, better marketed varieties to remain in a 'no surplus' condition for some time." **LM**

Canadians still enjoy '88 crop

Though the United States is a net exporter of turfseed, some of what New Zealand and Canada exports may find its way here.

From New Zealand comes perennial ryegrasses Nui and Ruanui, which are harvested in January. Usually pegged for forage use, they may have lawn applications.

Estimates are that New Zealand will import as much as 20 million pounds of seed this year, according to Dave Nelson, director of the Oregon Fine Fescue Commission.

Rain has kept Canada's harvest of fescue and forage seed down significantly from last year, according to Al Dooley, a special commodity analyst with Alberta Agriculture. Canada exports about 20 million pounds of fescue annually, some of which finds its way into bluegrass mixtures.

"The United States is our most important market by a long shot," says Dooley. "You guys take 70 to 90 percent of our export."

Canada's principal turfgrass is the creeping red fescue Boreal, used primarily as a filler in Kentucky bluegrass mixtures.

"We feel it's a good variety because of its shade tolerance, hardiness, and the fact that it's a creeper that fills in bare spots well," says Marvin Nakonetchny, secretary master of Canada's Forage Seed Council. The exportability of Boreal depends on U.S. demand, says Nakonetchny, and the current market price of 25 cents/lb. is likely to send most of it into storage.

"The fact that it's sold as a no-name variety in the U.S. is a problem we should address," he adds.

Canadian seed comes from the prairie provinces: the Peace River region of Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Last year Canada enjoyed an exceptional crop, says Dooley. That resulted in the export of approximately 18.5 million pounds of fescue, 13.6 million pounds of red clover, 8.0 million pounds of sweet clover, 5.25 pounds of alsike clover and 1.5 million pounds of bromegrass clover.

Because of the region's climate, storing the seed for several years is not a problem. As a result, last year's bumper crop is still on hand should America's bluegrass market take off this fall.

A very limited amount of Canada's acreage does consist of bluegrasses. Canadians are also looking at turf-type fescues and ryegrasses, "... but so far it's insignificant," adds Nakonetchny.

—Will Perry □

ROUGH BLUEGRASS

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Laser poa trivialis	Lofts Great Western	B
Sabie	International	B

COMMON BLUEGRASS

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Argyle	Olsen-Fennel	B
Kenblue	Jacklin/Olsen-Fennel/ Turf Merchants/Roberts	B/B/A/C
Merit	Van Der Have	B
Newport	Olsen-Fennel/Van Der Have/Northrup King/Roberta	C/B/B/B
Park	Jacklin/Turf Merchants/ Northrup King/Roberts	B/A/B/B
S-21	Jacklin	B
South Dakota	Jacklin	B
Troy	Jacklin	B
Garfield	Jacklin	B

WINTER OVERSEEDING BLENDS

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Alliance	Turf Seed	B
CBS II	Turf Seed	B
Champion	Seed Research	B
Dixie Green	International	B
Dixie Green tall fescue	International	B
Dixie Green + Sabre	International	B
Double Eagle blend	Lesco	B
Double Eagle + Sabre	Lesco	B
Eagle Blend	Lesco	B
Futura Plus	Pickseed	B
Futura 2000	Pickseed	B
Futura 2000E	Pickseed	C
3CN Intermediate Ryegrass	Lesco	B
Magnum	Proprietary	B
Medalist 5	Northrup King	B
Medalist 6	Northrup King	B
Medalist 7	Northrup King	B
Medalist 7 + Sabre	Northrup King	B
Medalist 300	Northrup King	B
Medalist 400	Northrup King	B
Medalist 400 +	Northrup King	B
Medalist 60/40	Northrup King	B
Par Blend	Lesco	B
Pennway Bent Blend	Lesco	B
Bent Blend Plus	Lesco	B
Ph. D.	International	B
Playmate	Roberts	B
Spectrum	Turf Merchants	B
Symphony	E.F. Burlingham & Sons	C
Tara-Green	Hubbard Seed & Supply	B
Transtar	Lesco	B
Triple Play Rye	Fine Lawn Research	B
Trilogy	E.F. Burlingham & Sons	C
V.I.P. Rye	Turf Merchants	B
Winter Turf I	O.M. Scott	B
Winter Turf III	O.M. Scott	B
Winter Turf V	O.M. Scott	B
Winter Turf IX	O.M. Scott	B

PERENNIAL RYEGRASS

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Allaire	Jonathan Green/Turf Merchants	A/B
All*Star	Jacklin	B
Assure	Lesco	C
Atlantic	Johathan Green	C
Aquarius	Turf Merchants	B
Barclay - Belle	E.F. Burlingham & Sons	C
Birdie II	Turf Seed	B
Blazer	Pickseed	B
Blazer II	Pickseed	B
Brenda	Van Der Have	B
Caddie	Northrup King	C
Calypso	Roberts	B
Champion	Seed Research	B
Charger	Turf Seed	B
Citation II	Turf Seed	A
Commander	Lesco	B
Competitor	E.F. Burlingham & Sons	C
Cowboy	Lofts Great Western	B
Dasher	Pickseed	B
Dasher II	Pickseed	B
Delray	Northrup King	B
Derby	International	B
Diplomat	Lofts Great Western	B
Elka	International	B
Envy	Zajac Performance Seeds	C
Fiesta	Pickseed	B
Fiesta II	Pickseed	B
Gator	International	B
Gettysburg	Jonathan	C
Goalie	Northrup King	C
Jazz	Pickseed	B
Lindsay	International	B
LEX 86	Pickseed	C
Magnum	Proprietary	B
Manhattan	Turf Seed/Turf Merchants	B/B
Mondial	Van Der Have	B
NK 2000	Northrup King	C
Nova	Seed Research/ Van Der Have	B/B
Omega II	Zajac Performance Seeds	C
Palmer	Lofts Great Western	B
Patriot	Turf Merchants	B
Pennant	Olsen-Fennel/Turf E.F. Burlingham & Sons	B/C
Pennfine	Olsen-Fennel/Turf Merchants/Northrup King/ Roberts	C/B/B/C
Pleasure	AMPAC	C
Plus	Olsen-Fennel	B
Polly	Daehnfeldt	B
Quartet (blend)	Van Der Have	B
Ranger	Van Der Have	B
Regency	Lesco	B
Repell	Lofts Great Western	B
Riviera	Roberts	B
Rodeo	Turf Merchants	B
Sheriff	Van Der Have	B
SR 4000	Seed Research	B
SR 4100	Seed Research	B
SR 4200	Seed Research	C
Sherwood	Jonathan Green	B
Stallion	Fine Lawn Research	B
246 Sunrye	Turf Seed	B
Tara	Ampac	B
Vantage	Proprietary Seeds	C
Vintage 2DF	Lesco	B
Yorktown II	Lofts Great Western	B
2H7	Van Der Have	C

SEED COUNTRY INSIGHTS

● Lofts' new Rebel Jr. turf-type tall fescue is doing okay its first time out, says **Gary Parker**. It yielded well, and the company is excited about Jr.'s prospects. Lofts is marketing five new varieties: the fescues include Rebel Jr., Bar-None and Tribute; bluegrasses 1757 and Suffolk, a joint venture with Jacklin Seed Co. Lofts' research director, **Richard Hurley**, thinks there's "real trouble ahead" for bluegrasses in the Northwest because "the turf-type tall fescue varieties are so good and they're going to be moving north . . ."

● Jacklin is moving ahead with its development of a turf-type redtop grass plant. **Dr. Doug Brede** has poly-crossed and harvested several types of the redtop. "We will plant out the progeny from this cross in 1989 to further refine a potential variety," says Brede. Redtop is a low maintenance variety that does well in adverse soil conditions . . .

● Demand for Longfellow chewings fescue grows each year, says **Doug Toews** of International Seeds . . .

● Northrup King is releasing a new Kentucky bluegrass variety, called Kelly. Good heat and drought tolerance, according to Northrup's **Joe Churchill** . . .

● Churchill also reports that Northrup will get an exclusive in 1990 on Pure Seed Testing's newest tall fescue, 5DM. To be renamed later . . .

● Maverick II is now available. Pickseed West calls it an improved turf-type tall fescue that is slower growing than the original Maverick, and has performed well in national tests . . .

● Charger is a new perennial ryegrass from Turf Seed, Inc. **Tom Stanley** reports it demonstrates dark green color, high density, lower growth habit and very good disease resistance . . .

● Mondial is an advanced synthetic turf-type perennial ryegrass cultivar developed by Mommersteeg. Van Der Have Oregon has it in adequate supply, and reports quick establishment as a benefit . . .

● Avanti is a new semi-dwarf turf-type tall fescue from Warren's Turf Nursery. High shade tolerance and low growth habit are two benefits. Limited in 1989; full production expected in 1990 . . .

● From Hubbard Seed & Supply: Hubbard 87 is a new dwarf turf-type tall fescue variety developed with **Dr. C. Reed Funk** of Rutgers University. Production will be controlled by Hubbard to meet the sod quality market needs; limited through 1991 crop year. Sod-Gem Turf-Type featuring Hubbard 87 also is limited through 1991 . . .

—Terry McIver □

CREEPING RED FESCUE

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Dawson	Van Der Have/Northrup King	C/B
Flyer	Fine Lawn Research	C
Ruby	Van Der Have	C
Salem	Jonathan Green	C
Virtus	Turf Merchants	C
Vista	Zajac Performance Seeds	C

CHEWINGS FESCUE

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Atlanta	Van Der Have	B
Atilla	Turf Merchants	C
Cascade	Olsen-Fennel	C
Center	Turf Merchants	C
Cindy	International	C
Dawson	Northrup King	B
Enjoy	International	B-
Ensylva	International	B-
Epsom	Van Der Have	C
Estacada	Turf Merchants	C
Fortress	Turf Seed	C
Jamestown	Lofts Great Western	C
Jasper	Pickseed	C
Koket	E.F. Burlingham & Sons	B
Longfellow	International	B-
Mary	Van Der Have	C
Pennlawn	Olsen-Fennel	B
Ranier	Olsen-Fennel	B
Ruby	Northrup King	B
Salem	Jonathan Green	C
Shademaster	Turf Seed/Lesco	C/C
SR 3000	Seed Research	B
SR 5000	Seed Research	B
Victory	Pickseed	B
Virtus	Turf Merchants	C
Wilma	E.F. Burlingham & Sons	B

HARD FESCUE

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Aurora	Turf Seed	A
Crystal	Lofts Great Western	B
Reliant	Lofts Great Western	B
Scaldis	Northrup King/Van Der Have	C/C
Silvana	Van Der Have	C
Spartan	Pickseed	B
Warwick	Jonathan Green	C

SHEEP FESCUE

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Azay	Pickseed	C
Bighorn	Turf Seed	B
MX-86	Jacklin	B

Key: A-surplus B-adequate C-limited
T-testing only S-sold out

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BENTGRASS

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Carmen	Van Der Have	C
Cobra	International	C+
Dominant Brand	Seed Research	B
Exeter colonial	Pickseed	B
Kingstown Velvet	Pickseed	C
National (creeping bent)	Pickseed	B
Penncross	Northrup	B/B
	King/Turf Seed	
Penneagle	Northrup	B/B
	King/Turf Seed	
Pennlinks	Northrup	B/B
	King/Turf Seed	
Pennway	Northrup	B/B
	King/Turf Seed	
Providence	Seed Research	C
Prominent	Seed Research	B
Putter	Jacklin	B
SR-1020	Seed Research	B
SR-7000	Seed Research	C
Colonial		
Tracenta	Van Der Have	C
V.I.P. Blend	Turf Merchants	A

Key: A-surplus B-adequate C-limited
T-testing only S-sold out

ANNUAL RYEGRASS

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Dalita	Daehnfeldt	B
Gulf	Olsen-Fennel	B

OTHER

VARIETY	MARKETER	AVAILABILITY
Au Triumph	International	B
Cajun	International	B
Certified		
Streaker Red Top	Jacklin	B
Cheyenne Bermudagrass	Jacklin	C
Crusader ryegrass/ hard fescue mix	Seed Research	B
Fults alkaligrass	Northrup King	B
JM-107 zoysiagrass	International	C
Martin	International	B
Mozark	International	B
Reubens Canada bluegrass	Jacklin	B

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