

2011/2012 Canadian Grass and Legume Seed Exports

Overview:

Since the world economic meltdown in the fall of 2008, Canadian grass and legume seed exports have seen a steady decline in export quantities.... until this past crop year.

For the first time since the 2006/07 crop year, Canadian grass and legume seed exports showed an increase from the previous year. Canadian exports were up 113.7% from 2010/11. Since Canada does not have actual production numbers, it is believed that a lot of carry-in inventories moved this past crop year. Production acres of most grass and forage seed species in Canada have been falling for a number of years now, especially with growers seeing better cash returns from annual crops, especially wheat and canola.



Canadian Grass and Legume Seed Exports by Species:

Exports for the crop year were up by over 12 million lbs. (from 91.35 to 103.88 million lbs.) compared to 2010/11 exports. The main contributors (by species) to this increase were:

- Alfalfa seed, up 1.4 million lbs.
- Smooth brome grass, up 470,000 lbs., meadow brome grass up 220,000 lbs.
- Creeping red fescue, up 7 million lbs.,
- Perennial ryegrass, up 6.0 million lbs.

For 2011/12, Perennial ryegrass exports seed exports ranked first in volume exported (27.24 million lbs.), with a big chunk of this total (13.85 million lbs.) destined for the USA. 2011/12 exports are up over 6 million lbs. from the previous year.

Creeping red fescue ranked 2nd, with over 27.06 million lbs. exported, However, this is a far cry from the 10 year average annual export figure of 38 million lbs. Of this total, 18.73 million lbs. found a home in the USA.

Alfalfa seed exports, at over 15 million lbs., ranked 3rd in Canadian exports. This is over 1.4 million lbs. above the previous crop year's export number of 15.05 million lbs.; it is still well below the 10 year average annual export figure of 21.33 million lbs.

Bird's-foot trefoil exports showed a 111% increase from the previous year, resulting in 1.7 million lbs. exported, compared to 810,000 lbs. in 2010/11.

| Canadian Grass and Legume Seed Exports by Crop Year (July to June) & Quantity - millions of lbs) | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | 2001/02 | 2002/03 | 2003/04 | 2004/05 | 2005/06 | 2006/07 | 2007/08 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | % change from 10/11 to 11/12 | 10 yr average |
| Total: World | 114.36 | 106.64 | 113.24 | 108.31 | 136.01 | 166.87 | 163.16 | 119.49 | 81.35 | 91.35 | 103.88 | 113.7% | 119.03 |
| Turf Grasses | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Fescue, Creeping red - cert | - | 13.39 | 12.19 | 17.06 | 10.45 | 4.49 | 10.17 | 8.16 | 4.84 | 6.24 | 14.05 | 225.2% | 10.10 |
| Fescue, Creeping red - o/t cert | - | 26.54 | 26.26 | 28.99 | 43.70 | 45.13 | 39.42 | 24.48 | 16.49 | 13.85 | 13.01 | 93.9% | 27.79 |
| Total Creeping Red Fescue | 33.21 | 39.93 | 38.46 | 46.05 | 54.14 | 49.62 | 49.59 | 32.64 | 21.33 | 20.09 | 27.06 | 134.7% | 37.89 |
| Fescue, nes | 1.12 | 0.61 | 0.96 | 0.89 | 0.97 | 1.00 | 0.71 | 0.86 | 0.56 | 0.58 | 0.62 | 106.8% | 0.77 |
| Blue grass, Kentucky | 0.41 | 0.76 | 1.15 | 1.00 | 1.70 | 1.07 | 1.41 | 0.96 | 0.72 | 0.72 | 0.56 | 76.7% | 1.00 |
| Rye grass, annual | 4.58 | 2.72 | 3.93 | 3.09 | 7.66 | 7.95 | 3.13 | 2.50 | 2.22 | 3.05 | 2.44 | 80.0% | 3.87 |
| Rye grass, perennial | 6.03 | 5.22 | 6.27 | 9.85 | 17.75 | 33.97 | 38.63 | 28.09 | 15.46 | 21.19 | 27.24 | 128.5% | 20.37 |
| Fescue, tall | 3.21 | 4.83 | 4.29 | 2.91 | 2.28 | 3.19 | 3.70 | 2.19 | 3.00 | 2.93 | 3.56 | 121.7% | 3.29 |
| Bent grass | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.17 | 0.24 | 0.08 | 0.12 | 0.01 | 0.04 | 0.07 | 0.08 | 0.01 | 6.1% | 0.08 |
| Legumes | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Alfalfa - certified | - | 8.49 | 12.98 | 6.08 | 5.81 | 13.88 | 11.12 | 10.62 | 6.48 | 6.35 | 7.98 | 125.8% | 8.98 |
| Alfalfa -o/t certified | - | 13.72 | 12.81 | 11.16 | 10.68 | 20.61 | 14.57 | 13.78 | 8.94 | 8.71 | 8.47 | 97.3% | 12.35 |
| Total Alfalfa | 30.74 | 22.22 | 25.79 | 17.24 | 16.49 | 34.48 | 25.69 | 24.40 | 15.42 | 15.05 | 16.46 | 109.3% | 21.33 |
| Clover, Alsike | 1.71 | 1.29 | 1.54 | 1.45 | 2.04 | 2.41 | 2.94 | 1.92 | 1.70 | 2.72 | 2.62 | 96.3% | 2.06 |
| Bird's-foot trefoil | 1.04 | 0.97 | 1.35 | 1.00 | 1.23 | 1.20 | 1.43 | 1.72 | 0.87 | 0.81 | 1.70 | 211.6% | 1.23 |
| Clover, Red - double cut | 6.11 | 1.91 | 2.36 | 0.60 | 0.51 | 1.59 | 1.39 | 1.42 | 0.15 | 0.35 | 0.26 | 74.2% | 1.05 |
| Clover, Red - nes | - | 4.24 | 4.23 | 2.73 | 4.07 | 4.52 | 3.93 | 2.76 | 1.74 | 2.87 | 3.14 | 109.4% | 3.42 |
| Total Red Clover | 6.11 | 6.15 | 6.59 | 3.33 | 4.59 | 6.10 | 5.32 | 4.18 | 1.90 | 3.22 | 3.40 | 105.6% | 4.48 |
| Clover - white | 0.25 | 0.26 | 0.27 | 0.20 | 0.13 | 0.27 | 0.20 | 0.18 | 0.04 | 0.34 | 0.12 | 34.9% | 0.20 |
| Clover - nes | 0.35 | 0.26 | 0.68 | 0.37 | 0.51 | 0.31 | 0.21 | 0.15 | 0.47 | 0.13 | 0.29 | 234.2% | 0.34 |
| Clover, Sweet | 1.37 | 1.21 | 1.63 | 0.98 | 1.28 | 1.33 | 1.06 | 1.04 | 1.20 | 1.23 | 1.61 | 130.5% | 1.26 |
| Forage Grasses | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Brome grass, smooth | 0.32 | 0.84 | 0.30 | 0.51 | 1.53 | 0.49 | 0.79 | 0.86 | 0.87 | 0.84 | 1.31 | 156.6% | 0.83 |
| Brome grass, meadow | 0.19 | 0.32 | 0.38 | 0.56 | 0.72 | 0.80 | 0.60 | 0.49 | 0.56 | 0.82 | 0.77 | 93.1% | 0.60 |
| Brome grass, nes | 0.08 | 0.05 | 0.07 | 0.05 | 0.02 | 0.11 | 0.18 | 0.16 | 0.29 | 0.31 | 0.47 | 152.9% | 0.17 |
| Fescue, meadow | 0.58 | 0.59 | 1.52 | 1.58 | 0.16 | 0.44 | 0.68 | 0.52 | 0.14 | 0.12 | 0.37 | 321.8% | 0.61 |
| Orchard grass | 0.07 | 0.01 | 0.20 | 0.08 | 0.10 | 0.05 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.19 | 2192.1% | 0.07 |
| Timothy - certified | - | 5.77 | 6.61 | 6.44 | 7.97 | 7.60 | 7.30 | 3.41 | 3.69 | 5.05 | | | 5.98 |
| Timothy - o/t certified | - | 6.26 | 6.05 | 4.37 | 7.17 | 3.50 | 0.79 | 0.22 | 0.10 | 0.20 | | | 3.18 |
| Total Timothy | 16.85 | 12.03 | 12.67 | 10.81 | 15.14 | 11.10 | 8.09 | 3.63 | 3.79 | 5.25 | | | 9.17 |
| Wheatgrass, crested | 0.89 | 0.76 | 1.40 | 1.15 | 2.66 | 1.20 | 1.67 | 1.16 | 0.77 | 1.29 | 1.69 | 130.9% | 1.37 |
| Wheatgrass, nes | 1.46 | 2.56 | 1.31 | 1.99 | 2.01 | 2.36 | 1.80 | 0.65 | 0.83 | 0.90 | 1.30 | 144.9% | 1.57 |
| Wild rye | 0.22 | 0.28 | 0.24 | 0.29 | 0.23 | 0.32 | 0.52 | 1.60 | 0.84 | 0.29 | 0.30 | 101.4% | 0.49 |
| Seeds of forage plants, nes | 3.57 | 2.76 | 2.08 | 2.69 | 2.60 | 6.98 | 14.78 | 9.53 | 8.28 | 9.39 | 9.80 | 104.4% | 6.89 |
| Total: World | 114.36 | 106.64 | 113.24 | 108.31 | 136.01 | 166.87 | 163.16 | 119.49 | 81.35 | 91.35 | 103.88 | 113.7% | 119.03 |

Note: timothy not classified in 2011/12, 10 year average =2002/03 to 2011/12

Low Canadian grass and legume seed inventory and low production numbers these past few years has resulted in increased values to the export trade. 2011/12 saw the total grass and legume seed trade value climb over \$110 million dollars, up significantly from the 2010/11 value of \$76.85 million. \$69.9 million worth of Canadian seed was exported to the USA.

Canadian Grass and Legume Seed Exports by Destination:

The USA remains our number one importing nation (2011/12 = 64.39 million lbs.). These 64.39 million lbs. represents over 60% of Canada's total grass and Legume seed exports for 2011/12.

Only 10 countries imported over 1 million lbs. of seed in 2011/12, with only two of these countries importing over 10 million lbs., the USA and China (10.13 million lbs.)

| Canadian Grass and Legume Seed Exports by Country / Quantity (millions of lbs) | | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Jul 06- Jun 07 | Jul 07- Jun 08 | Jul 08- Jun 09 | Jul 09- Jun 10 | Jul 10- Jun 11 | Jul 11- Jun 12 | Change from 10/11 to 11/12 | % of Canadian Trade |
| -- World -- | 166.77 | 163.16 | 119.49 | 81.35 | 91.37 | 104.62 | 114.5% | |
| 1 United States | 129.38 | 124.09 | 90.12 | 61.42 | 62.02 | 64.39 | 103.8% | 61.5% |
| 2 China | 4.05 | 4.94 | 4.74 | 5.20 | 5.01 | 10.13 | 202.2% | 9.7% |
| 3 Netherlands | 5.17 | 8.27 | 4.03 | 3.74 | 8.12 | 9.78 | 120.5% | 9.4% |
| 4 Germany | 7.70 | 9.77 | 6.51 | 2.68 | 4.09 | 6.05 | 148.0% | 5.8% |
| 5 Italy | 7.80 | 5.57 | 3.06 | 1.04 | 2.97 | 2.84 | 95.6% | 2.7% |
| 6 Poland | 1.17 | 1.08 | 0.91 | 0.05 | 0.39 | 1.51 | 384.4% | 1.4% |
| 7 United Kingdom | 1.65 | 2.58 | 1.24 | 1.18 | 1.59 | 1.34 | 84.1% | 1.3% |
| 8 France | 0.84 | 0.77 | 0.69 | 0.59 | 0.93 | 1.19 | 128.1% | 1.1% |
| 9 Russia | 0.34 | 0.60 | 0.22 | 0.03 | 0.09 | 1.07 | 1146.6% | 1.0% |
| 10 Argentina | 1.63 | 0.86 | 0.97 | 0.88 | 0.60 | 1.01 | 167.0% | 1.0% |
| other (32+ countries) | 8.30 | 6.15 | 7.39 | 4.03 | 5.02 | 5.32 | 105.8% | 5.1% |

Canadian Grass and Legume Seed Exports, Selected Countries:

USA

- Exports to the USA only increased by 3 % last year, (2.3 million lbs.) made up primarily of increased alfalfa seed imports (certified alfalfa up by 1.2 million lbs., common alfalfa imports by 2.6 million lbs.). Canada's top two grass seed crops imported by the USA, perennial ryegrass and creeping red fescue, fell by 300,000 lbs. and 2.1 million lbs. respectively.
- Creeping red fescue (18.7 million lbs.), perennial ryegrass (13.8 million lbs.) and alfalfa (12.2 million lbs.) made up the majority of the USAs' 64.39 million lbs. of Canadian grass/legume seed imports. As well, seed mixtures accounted for another 8.4 million lbs. of imports.
- Sweet clover imports by the USA rose by 147% from 2010/11 (to 1.1 million lbs. imported). Red clover seed imports were at 1.4 million lbs., near the 1.3 million lbs. of imports in 2010/11.
- Meadow brome grass seed exports to the USA are finally making headway, as it has traditionally been used domestically. Although total exports remain steady, 2011/12 saw exports to the USA increase 388% (from 80,000 lbs. to 300,000 lbs. in 11/12)

| Canadian Grass and Legume Seed Exports to USA by Species (millions of lbs) | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| | Jul 06- Jun 07 | Jul 07- Jun 08 | Jul 08- Jun 09 | Jul 09- Jun 10 | Jul 10- Jun 11 | Jul 11- Jun 12 | % change from 10/11 to 11/12 | 6 year Average |
| World (Total) | 166.77 | 163.16 | 119.49 | 81.35 | 91.37 | 104.62 | 114.5% | 145.35 |
| United States (Total) | 129.38 | 124.09 | 90.12 | 61.42 | 62.02 | 63.93 | 103.1% | 106.19 |
| Rye grass, perennial | 28.22 | 31.08 | 23.08 | 10.75 | 14.13 | 13.85 | 98.0% | 24.22 |
| Creeping red fescue, o/t cert | 45.13 | 38.60 | 22.47 | 16.28 | 13.15 | 12.56 | 95.5% | 29.64 |
| Creeping red fescue, cert | 3.18 | 12.74 | 11.99 | 8.50 | 7.73 | 6.17 | 79.8% | 10.06 |
| Creeping Red Fescue, Total | 48.31 | 51.34 | 34.46 | 24.78 | 20.88 | 18.73 | 89.7% | 39.70 |
| Seeds of forage plants, nes | 6.63 | 14.55 | 9.16 | 8.04 | 8.84 | 8.37 | 94.7% | 11.12 |
| Alfalfa o/t cert | 15.41 | 1.95 | 2.94 | 3.58 | 4.74 | 7.33 | 154.6% | 7.19 |
| Alfalfa, cert | 7.40 | 8.66 | 9.28 | 5.13 | 3.67 | 4.93 | 134.3% | 7.81 |
| Alfalfa, Total | 22.81 | 10.61 | 12.22 | 8.71 | 8.41 | 12.26 | 145.7% | 15.00 |
| Tall fescue | 2.20 | 2.88 | 1.17 | 1.35 | 2.01 | 1.72 | 85.5% | 2.27 |
| Red clover, nes | 2.43 | 1.66 | 0.55 | 0.58 | 0.80 | 1.14 | 143.7% | 1.43 |
| Red clover, double cut | 0.98 | 0.90 | 0.67 | 0.56 | 0.46 | 0.28 | 60.3% | 0.77 |
| Red Clover, Total | 3.42 | 2.56 | 1.22 | 1.14 | 1.26 | 1.42 | 113.1% | 2.20 |
| Alsike clover | 1.43 | 1.58 | 1.61 | 1.40 | 1.12 | 1.13 | 100.8% | 1.65 |
| Sweet clover | 1.29 | 0.46 | 0.62 | 0.50 | 0.44 | 1.08 | 247.6% | 0.88 |
| Wheatgrass, nes | 1.87 | 1.00 | 1.01 | 1.06 | 0.90 | 0.84 | 93.5% | 1.34 |
| Wheatgrass, crested | 1.18 | 1.55 | 0.80 | 0.54 | 0.73 | 0.65 | 89.4% | 1.09 |
| Fescue nes | 0.96 | 1.50 | 0.99 | 1.03 | 0.92 | 0.64 | 69.3% | 1.21 |
| Kentucky blue grass | 0.87 | 0.75 | 0.47 | 0.34 | 0.30 | 0.58 | 191.9% | 0.66 |
| Rye grass, annual | 3.30 | 0.35 | 0.39 | 0.29 | 0.27 | 0.56 | 207.5% | 1.03 |
| Brome grass, smooth | 0.39 | 1.41 | 0.31 | 0.20 | 0.46 | 0.48 | 106.0% | 0.65 |
| Bird's-foot trefoil | 0.69 | 0.47 | 0.66 | 0.35 | 0.54 | 0.35 | 65.8% | 0.61 |
| Brome grass, nes | 0.06 | 0.14 | 0.16 | 0.29 | 0.30 | 0.34 | 115.6% | 0.26 |
| Brome grass, meadow | 0.52 | 0.30 | 0.23 | 0.08 | 0.08 | 0.30 | 388.1% | 0.30 |
| Meadow fescue | 0.09 | 0.11 | 0.13 | 0.28 | 0.04 | 0.25 | 594.2% | 0.18 |
| Wild rye | 0.22 | 1.37 | 1.32 | 0.15 | 0.24 | 0.21 | 86.0% | 0.70 |
| Clover nes | 0.22 | 0.02 | 0.07 | 0.07 | 0.09 | 0.13 | 145.6% | 0.12 |
| White clover | 0.05 | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 0.04 | 102.7% | 0.04 |
| Bent grass | 0.04 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 177.3% | 0.02 |
| Orchard grass | 0.05 | 0.01 | 0.01 | 0.02 | 0.03 | 0.01 | 15.7% | 0.03 |
| Timothy, o/t cert | 0.4 | timothy classification into the USA no longer classified as an individual species, grouped with "seeds of forage plants, nes" | | | | | | |
| Timothy, cert | 1.7 | | | | | | | |
| Timothy, o/t cert | 2.5 | | | | | | | |

China

- China doubled her imports from 2010/11 to 2011/12 (5.01 to 10.13 million lbs.).

- China was back in the Canadian market for alfalfa seed, increasing its' imports in 2011/12 to 1.02 million lbs. for certified seed, and 845,000 lbs. for common alfalfa seed. This is up substantially from 10/11, which showed alfalfa seed imports at 280,000 lbs. and 166,000 lbs. respectively for certified and common alfalfa.
- It wasn't just alfalfa that showed marked increased in import quantities, as red clover seed imports were up by 180% (to 636,000 lbs., from 355,000 in 2010/11), tall fescue imports up by 235% (to 844,000 lbs., from 358,000 lbs. in 2010/11), Kentucky bluegrass (to 113,000 lbs. from 38,000 lbs. in 2010/11), perennial ryegrass (to 4.54 million lbs. from 2.78 million in 2010/11), and crested wheatgrass (to 953,000 lbs. from 380,000 in 2010/11).
- However, a big downfall was encountered in creeping red fescue imports, as China only imported 66,000 lbs. in 2011/12, compared to 952,000 lbs. in 2010/11.

The Netherlands

- The Netherlands, Canada's 3rd largest grass/legume seed trading partner in 2011/12, imported 9.78 million lbs. of seed. Grass and legume seed imports into the Netherlands increased 67% from 2010/11. Perennial ryegrass accounted for over 2.84 million lbs. of this total, creeping red fescue imports at 2.18 million lbs. (all certified seed), followed by alfalfa seed (1.23 million lbs.). Close to a million lbs. of red clover was also imported from Canada (950,000 lbs.).

Russia

- Although Russia ranked 9th on Canada's list of main grass and legume seed imports, Russia went from 90,000 lbs. of grass/legume seed imports in 2010/11 to over 1.07 million lbs. in 2011/12. The increase in Russian imports was made up of only two categories, certified alfalfa seed, which went from 44,000 lbs. imported in 2010/11 to 97,000 lbs. in 2011/12. However, the biggest increased occurred in "Seeds of forage plants, not elsewhere specified", which basically is the export category for grass/legume seed mixtures. Export volumes increased almost 2000%, going from 49,000 lbs. in 2010/11 to over 960,000 lbs. in 2011/12.

Canadian Exports by Province

Manitoba, with its' diverse grass/legume seed production areas, and strong perennial ryegrass seed production, once again led all Canadian provinces as the leading grass/legume seed exporting province (46.8% of total Canadian exports). Alberta exports stood at 34.3%, made up primarily of the Peace River regions' creeping red fescue and the Brook's areas' alfalfa seed. Compared to the previous year, Manitoba's exports increased by 8.5 million lbs., while Alberta's exports increased by 5 million lbs. However, without actual yearly production numbers, much of this increase in volume in exports is credited to carry-in inventories. Existing stocks of most grass and legume seed species are now at low levels.

| Canadian Grass and Legume Seed Exports by Province (Millions of lbs) | | | | | | | |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| | Jul 06- Jun 07 | Jul 07- Jun 08 | Jul 08- Jun 09 | Jul 09- Jun 10 | Jul 10- Jun 11 | Jul 11- Jun 12 | % change from 10/11 to 11/12 |
| Total (Canada) | 166.8 | 155.1 | 115.9 | 77.6 | 86.1 | 103.9 | 120.7% |
| Manitoba | 63.0 | 65.1 | 52.2 | 34.9 | 40.1 | 48.6 | 121.1% |
| Alberta | 67.2 | 62.3 | 40.8 | 29.3 | 30.6 | 35.6 | 116.3% |
| Saskatchewan | 27.0 | 18.2 | 13.6 | 8.6 | 10.5 | 10.7 | 102.2% |
| Ontario | 4.4 | 3.8 | 3.3 | 1.6 | 1.9 | 4.6 | 241.6% |
| British Columbia | 3.8 | 2.8 | 3.8 | 2.3 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 106.6% |
| Quebec | 1.2 | 2.4 | 1.8 | 0.8 | 1.1 | 2.5 | 223.1% |
| Prince Edward Island | 0.0 | 0.2 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.1 | - | 0.0% |
| New Brunswick | 0.1 | 0.3 | 0.4 | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.1 | 147.3% |
| Nova Scotia | 0.0 | - | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 180.3% |
| Northwest Territory | - | 0.0 | - | - | - | - | |

Summary:

With revenues for annual crops at very attractive levels, grass and legume seed production acres in Canada, in the foreseeable future, will be down. With very low carry-in stocks, the 2011/12 Canadian grass and legume seed exports “recovery” may only be a blip on a bumpy road down. The world economy is still on shaky ground. North American cattle numbers are still recovering from drought and herd liquidation. Prices to growers for forage grass and legume seed will continue to be above historical price levels, but how much seed will be produced and available in upcoming years will be the question.



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