

Grass and Legume Seed Market Update – Dec 3, 2013

The winter doldrums have settled into the grass and legume seed marketplace. Processors who attended the annual grass and legume seed meetings in Kansas City early last month report the industry is upbeat, and looking forward to the future. But sales have not taken off. However, this is not surprising, as the end users have taken a “hand to mouth” attitude, with buying on an “as needed basis”. Therefore, despite lower inventories for almost all grass and legume seed species, don’t expect new sales until the spring buying season. In the meantime, make sure, if you’ve got grass or legume seed in the bin, to take your samples into your local processor. Let them know what you got, how much you got, and know your quality. Getting it cleaned now will also prepare you for this “hand to mouth buying” situation.

The fine fescue crop out of Oregon is reported to be down substantially this year. This includes the hard fescues, chewing’s, sheep’s, and creeping red. Creeping red fescue quotes have moved to the 70 ¢/lb. or more, but New Year quotes may get 5 ¢/lb. stronger. Demand for certified seed is lacking at present, but typically command a 5 to 10 ¢/lb. premium.

Forage grass seed prices have moved lately. Smooth brome grass bottomed out earlier this fall, but is now quoted in the \$1.30 to \$1.45 range. However, there is a big Kansas smooth brome crop to move first. Meadow brome grass seed production is down this year, with quotes for common seed in the \$1.30 to \$1.60/lb. range. Timothy seed quotes continue to be quoted between 65 to 80 ¢/lb. Certified timothy acres are up this year, with a lot of contracted proprietary varieties grown. Uncommitted certified timothy should command a 10 ¢/lb. premium.

Legume seed prices continue to hover at high levels. Alsike quotes have moved to the \$1.20 to \$1.40/lb. range. Red clover seed quotes are in the 65 to 90 ¢/lb. range. However, price improvements may be forthcoming, as red clover prices have increased 33 ¢/lb. in Oregon since a year ago. Alfalfa seed quotes are reported to be in the \$1.60 to \$1.85/lb. range.

Despite grass and legume seed quotes showing continued improvement, growers are still not committed to growing these seed crops yet. As long as annual crop production continues to show profit, this “lack of grass and legume seed acres” may continue. We already know that inventory levels are low, acres are down, so until this situation is remedied, expect prices to continue to rise. Question is, will you be growing some seed and in a position to take advantage of this?

Grass and Legume Seed Quotes (quotes in ¢ / lb)												
	Creeping Red Fescue	Boreal C R Fescue	Smooth Brome grass	Carlton Smooth Brome grass	Meadow Brome grass	Fleet Meadow Brome grass	Timothy	Climax Timothy	Alfalfa	Red Clover	Alsike Clover	Sweet Clover
Date	Com #1	Cert #1	Com #1	Cert #1	Com #1	Cert #1	Com #1	Cert #1	Com #1	Com #1	Com #1	Com #1
Jan 3-12	45-48	55-60	110-130	140-150	100-130	120-140	70-75	80-100	150-165	75-90	100-115	60-85
Apr 10-12	48-50	55-60	130-155	160-165	120-125	135-145	70-75	85-90	160-170	65-70	100-110	60-80
Jun 4-12	50	55-60	140-165	160-175	105 - 115	130-140	70-75	80-90	165-180	65-75	100-125	65-75
Aug 1-12	50	55-60	140-165	160-175	105 - 115	130-140	70-75	80-90	165-180	65-75	100	50-70
Oct 2-12	50	55-60	170-190	190-205	115-140	145-160	80-85	95-110	165-180	65-80	110-120	50-70
Dec 4-12	55	60-65	175-200	200-220	115-140	145-160	75-85	95-110	165-180	75-85	110-125	50-70
May 1-13	58-60	63-65	170-220	200-240	130-175	170-200	75-80	95-110	165-180	75-80	110-120	60-70
Jun 4-13	60	65	200-220	220-260	130-175	170-200	75-80	95-110	165-180	75-80	110-120	60-70
Jul 2-13	65	65-70	180-220	200-260	130-175	170-200	75-80	85-100	165-180	78-80	110-120	60-70
Aug 6-13	65	65-70	110-130	120-150	100-130	120-150	70-75	80-100	160-180	65-80	100-120	50-70
Sept 2-13	65	70	100-130	120-150	100-140	130-160	70-80	90-100	160-190	65-80	100-120	50-70
Oct 1-13	65	65-70	110-135	120-150	110-140	130-160	70-80	90-100	160-190	65-80	100-120	50-70
Nov 5-13	65	65-70	110-135	120-150	110-140	130-160	70-80	90-100	160-190	65-80	100-120	50-70
Dec 3-13	70	75	130-150	140-150	120-160	150-170	65-80	90-100	170-190	65-90	120-140	50-70

Prices are quotes only, until actual orders come in, that's when firm pricing is established