

Historical Grass and Legume Seed Prices: 1970 to 2016

2016 Summary

With consistent demand but dwindling inventories of most grass and legume seed species, prices for good quality seed rose the past few years. As prices attracted more growers, and with very good seed establishment the past two years, what was expected to happen..... happened. The old adage "What kills good prices is..... good prices!" has held true.



Low inventories had led to strong price quotes, which led to more acres being seeded, and with good establishment and growing conditions, and above average production, the end result has seen price quotes drop substantially this past year.

2015 had seen prices rise steadily for most grass and legume seed, with the exception being common timothy seed (quotes falling 10-12 ¢/lb). Certified timothy though, held on to her own. The big "gainers" however, were the bromegrasses. Smooth bromegrass seed prices rose \$1.05/lb. (common) while certified rose \$1.15/lb. 2015 saw meadow bromegrass quotes rise \$1.10 to \$1.18/lb (common and certified respectively). Alsike clover seed prices rose 14 ¢/lb to 28 ¢/lb, while red clover seed prices rose 40-45 ¢/lb. All in all, a good year to be selling grass and legume seed.... if you had any.

Price quotes for 2016 started off fine, with above average price quotes across the board for all species.

Average Grass and legume Seed Quotes - 2016 (¢/cwt)														
\$/lb (CWT)		Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	avg
Alfalfa	Common	187	186	186	179	179	176	175	170	171	170	165	160	1.753
Alfalfa	Certified	220	222	223	213	214	211	212	215	214	206	191	189	2.108
Alsike	Common	147	148	147	142	145	143	136	137	146	157	153	153	1.462
Alsike	Certified	165	165	165	167	165	167	167	168	168	180	155	158	1.658
Smooth Brome	Common	290	307	305	305	285	217	156	142	153	160	154	154	2.190
Smooth Brome	Certified	327	358	353	328	310	250	174	154	182	188	181	181	2.488
Meadow Brome	Common	313	325	325	325	307	237	169	158	178	213	209	209	2.473
Meadow Brome	Certified	340	350	348	348	328	280	186	179	212	238	233	233	2.729
Fescue	Common	79	80	79	78	78	77	81	80	79	81	81	82	0.796
Fescue	Certified	81	81	81	82	81	81	81	80	81	84	83	83	0.816
Sweet Clover	Common	85	81	73	71	89	68	63	58	49	49	47	47	0.650
Red Clover	Common	156	154	152	134	100	120	108	101	88	100	112	112	1.198
Timothy	Common	52	52	51	53	51	45	28	26	26	28	28	28	0.390
Timothy	Certified	66	65	62	60	65	57	47	45	45	54	68	68	0.585
		Low \$ for yr,			High \$ for the year									

Then, with the onslaught of timely and abundant rainfall across production areas throughout Alberta, a bumper crop was expected, and achieved. Prices which were at historical highs fell quickly. Many species saw their price quotes drop 30-50%. The lowest price quotes for many species occurred in July and August, with some species showing slight price recovery by year end. The largest price drops occurred with the bromegrasses, which saw prices fall \$1.35 to \$1.46/lb. (smooth bromegrass seed) and by \$1.00 to \$1.07/lb. for meadow bromegrass seed. By the end of the year, red clover prices had fallen 35-40 ¢/lb, while common timothy quotes had fallen 24-25 ¢/lb.

As we enter 2017, it appeared as if price quotes for some species had recovered. However, one should keep in mind that in many production areas, crops were left unharvested due to a wet fall and the arrival of snow. It is hoped that these crops will get harvested, and if so, may once again push prices quotes lower. Despite the drastic price drops in most species, if you look at the long-term average quotes provided in the past 10 years, most all species closed 2016 with price quotes still above their 10 year averages. (see chart below)

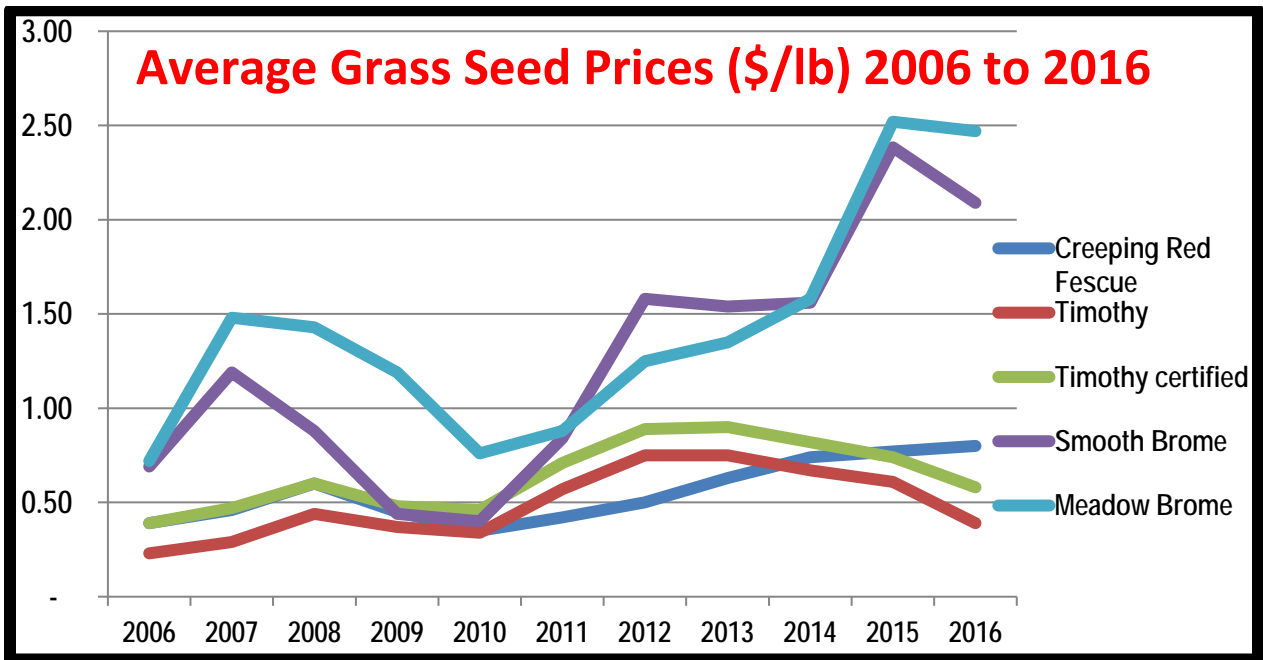
Average Yearly Prices

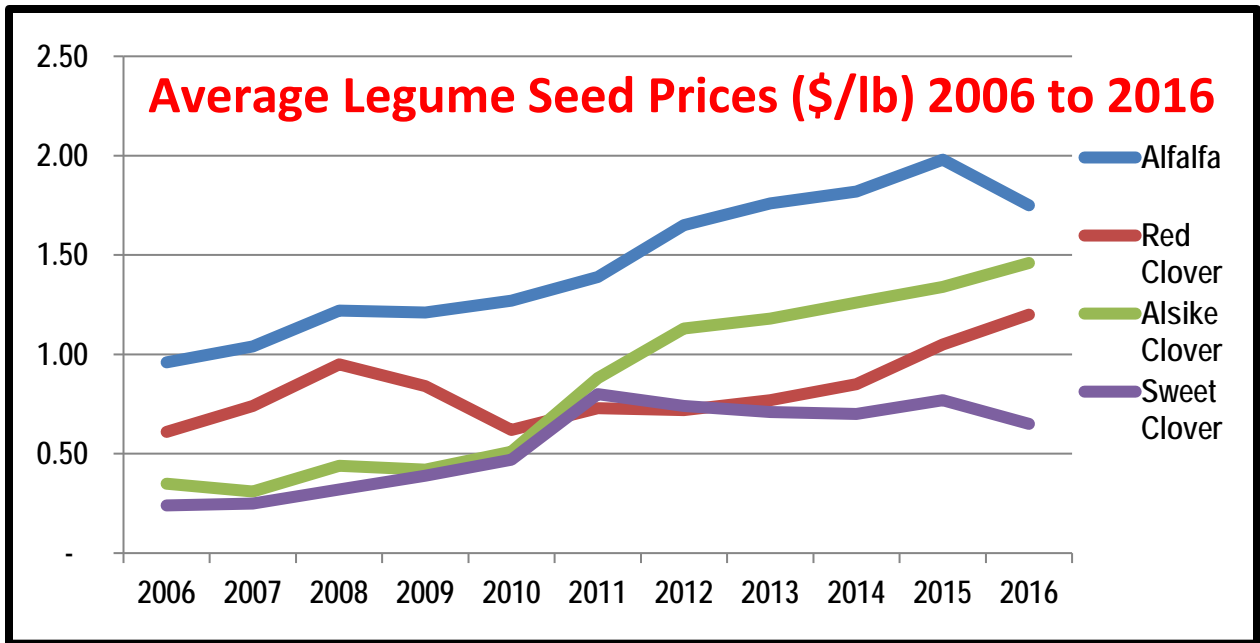
The following table and accompanying graphs provide historical price information for the more commonly grown turf, forage, and legume seed crops of Alberta. Price's provided are **averages**, and reflect prices paid to growers, for clean and bagged seed, ready for shipping. Prices within any given year will have reached higher or lower levels than those shown in the tables. It is wise to use the prices provided as a guide for each crop. Alberta's "Agricultural Financial Services Corporation" (AFSC) has tracked prices on a monthly basis since 1999.

Yearly Average Prices Paid to Producers - 2006 to 2016

	Creeping Red Fescue	Timothy	Timothy certified	Smooth Brome	Meadow Brome	Alfalfa	Red Clover	Alsike Clover	Sweet Clover
2006	0.39	0.23	0.39	0.69	0.72	0.96	0.61	0.35	0.24
2007	0.46	0.29	0.47	1.19	1.48	1.04	0.74	0.31	0.25
2008	0.60	0.44	0.60	0.88	1.43	1.22	0.95	0.44	0.32
2009	0.45	0.37	0.48	0.44	1.19	1.21	0.84	0.42	0.39
2010	0.35	0.34	0.46	0.40	0.76	1.27	0.62	0.51	0.47
2011	0.42	0.57	0.71	0.84	0.88	1.39	0.73	0.88	0.80
2012	0.50	0.75	0.89	1.58	1.25	1.65	0.72	1.13	0.74
2013	0.63	0.75	0.90	1.54	1.35	1.76	0.77	1.18	0.71
2014	0.74	0.67	0.82	1.56	1.58	1.82	0.85	1.26	0.70
2015	0.77	0.61	0.74	2.38	2.52	1.98	1.05	1.34	0.77
10 yr Avg.	0.53	0.50	0.65	1.15	1.32	1.43	0.79	0.78	0.54
2016	0.80	0.39	0.58	2.09	2.47	1.75	1.20	1.46	0.65
Dec 2016 Quotes	0.82	0.28	0.68	1.54	2.09	1.60	1.12	1.53	0.47
Above 10 Yr. Avg.									
Below 10 Yr. Avg.									

Price Quotes in CDN \$, \$/lb.





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