USA Grass and Legume Seed Data: Oregon Production - 2007 to 2016

Background:

USA seed production continues to dominate world production, with the majority of this American production centered in Oregon. Production continues to be active, with Oregon acres still hovering around the 450,000 acre range. On a worldwide scale, Oregon produces the most seed from one region, and has the most concentration of acres. Major seed crops grown in the state includes: perennial ryegrass, tall fescue (turf types), annual ryegrass, and fine fescues. What happens in the grass and legume seed industry in Oregon has worldwide implications, therefore, the eyes of the grass and legume seed industry continues to focus on her production.

Oregon Grass and Legume Seed Crops Preliminary Estimates (2002 - 2014)

Grasses	Area Harvested (acres) 2015	Area Harvested (acres) 2016	Area Harvested Δ from 2015 to 16	Area Harvested 10 yr. avg (2005-16)	Production (000 lbs.) 2015	Production (000 lbs.) 2016	Production Δ from 2013 to 14 (± %)	Production (000 lbs.) 10 yr avg (2004-13)	Yield per Acre 2015	Yield per Acre 2016	Yield Δ from 2015 to 2016 (±	Yield per Acre 10 yr. avg (2004-13)	Price ($ / cwt) 2015	Price ($ / cwt) 2016	Price Δ from 2013 to 14 (± %)	Price ($ / cwt) 10 yr avg
Annual ryegrass	121,290	115,490	-4.1%	124,030	220,398	217,237	7.2%	231,563	1,817	1,881	11.9%	1,867	29.00	33.00	-12.9%	26.61
Perennial ryegrass	95,380	95,130	7.1%	132,783	126,609	146,215	20.5%	195,907	1,327	1,537	12.5%	1,491	84.00	82.00	-1.4%	64.08
Tall fescue	138,640	135,020	-0.2%	142,472	192,428	207,121	8.2%	220,532	1,387	1,534	8.4%	1,550	74.00	74.00	-8.0%	56.54
Kentucky bluegrass	15,940	18,280	10.3%	16,510	18,183	21,637	22.7%	18,283	1,141	1,184	11.2%	1,134	136.00	137.00	8.6%	99.24
Rough bluegrass	890	1,030	-61.3%	2,209	1,318	1,071	-63.2%	2,340	1,481	1,039	-4.9%	1,064	134.00	135.00	52.3%	126.22
Orchardgrass	12,970	13,330	-4.2%	15,895	8,585	12,300	1.6%	13,015	662	923	6.1%	817	174.00	212.00	12.0%	92.20
Chewings fescue	8,340	8,450	-2.2%	8,095	9,474	9,737	-3.9%	9,721	1,136	1,148	-1.7%	1,188	105.00	101.00	5.6%	72.76
Red fescue	8,540	9,160	21.9%	7,581	9,251	9,588	26.1%	7,850	1,083	1,047	3.5%	1,021	102.00	101.00	8.5%	68.41
Hard fescue	1,810	2,470	-32.1%	2,219	1,655	2,699	5.4%	1,881	914	1,093	55.2%	783	110.00	140.00	-0.9%	88.77
Colonial bentgrass	3,000	3,080	12.8%	2,861	1,200	1,222	38.7%	1,200	400	397	23.0%	414	260.00	250.00	33.6%	156.47
Creeping bentgrass	3,330	3,860	22.8%	3,831	1,697	2,274	13.9%	2,481	510	589	0.6%	648	327.00	340.00	7.5%	300.00
Total Grasses	410,130	405,300	-1.2%	458,485	590,799	631,101	6.8%	704,771								
Legumes																
Alfalfa	4,980	7,990	65.6%	3,229	3,954	5,303	70.8%	2,338	794	664	3.2%	752	176.00	225.00	15.6%	177.19
Red clover	14,820	16,490	-7.4%	15,760	7,545	14,093	-10.8%	10,287	509	855	-3.7%	645	160.00	112.00	38.2%	112.35
Crimson clover	7,780	6,630	12.7%	7,054	8,763	6,564	42.4%	6,306	1126	990	26.3%	892	53.00	75.00	22.3%	74.21
Common vetch	510	380	130.9%	371	433	432	53.0%	555	849	1,137	-33.7%	1,285	50.00	45.00	32.5%	57.00
Hairy vetch	680	1350	13.6%	688	306	874	-19.1%	583	450	647	-28.7%	818	135.00	110.00	13.6%	93.50
White clover/Ladino	11,500	12,660	2.9%	9,602	6652	6780	3.2%	4,699	578	536	0.4%	492	221.00	219.00	-4.0%	168.73
Arrowleaf clover	630	660	-14.9%	626	599	564	-15.3%	356	950	855	-0.4%	717	115.00	120.00	-7.6%	83.89
Total Legumes	40,900	46,160	12.9%	37,328	28,252	34,610	22.5%	24,920								
Total Grass & Legume	451,030	451,460	0.1%	495,813	619,051	665,711	7.5%	729,691								

2016 Oregon Production

- **Production Acres**

2016 saw total grass and legume seed production acres in Oregon total 451,000 acres, below the 10 year average of 466,000 acres. Grass seed acres were at 405,000 acres, 21,000 acres below the 10 year average. Compared to the previous year, grass seed acres fell by 5000, while legume seed acres rose by 5000. However, with legume seed acres increasing in 2016, total Oregon grass and legume seed acres remained stable (430 more acres in 2016)

Grass seed production in Oregon is still dominated by the turf grasses, mainly Tall fescue (135,000 acres), annual ryegrass (115,000 acres) and perennial ryegrass (95,000 acres). However, 2016 saw drops in by

annual ryegrass acres (down 6000), and tall fescue acres (down 3000). Perennial ryegrass seed acres were unchanged.

Kentucky bluegrass seed production rose by over 14% from 2015, with 18,300 acres harvested in 2016.

2016 saw both alfalfa and red clover seed acres increase by 2000... In fact, total legume seed acres are at its highest acreage in the past 10 years, with acres 6000 above the 10 year average. Legume acres in Oregon are led by red clover (16,000) and white clover (12,600), while alfalfa acres increased by 60%, with almost 8,000 acres now in Oregon.

Oregon's legume seed acres increased by 5,000 in 2016 (total = 46,000), led by more acres of alfalfa (+3,000), red clover (+1,600) and white clover (+1,100)

- **Total Production**

After 2015's downturn in production, 2016 saw grass seed yields rebound to average yields once again. As a result, total grass seed production rose 6.8% to 631 million lbs. But with grass seed acres still 20,000 below the 10 yr. average; overall production is still 40 million below the 10 yr. average.

2016 production was led by the "big three", namely annual ryegrass (217 million lbs.), tall fescue (207 million lbs).) and perennial ryegrass (146 million lbs.). Only two other crops totaled over 10 million lbs., those being Kentucky bluegrass (22 million) and orchardgrass (12 million). Perennial ryegrass, annual ryegrass and tall fescue made up over 97% of Oregon's total grass seed production in 2016. With a coastal climate made for grass seed production, yields of these crops flourish in Oregon. Supported by excellent grass seed production management practices, 10 year average yields for perennial ryegrass, annual ryegrass and tall fescue come in at 1,521 lbs./ac., 1922 lbs./ac., and 1,543 lbs./ac. respectively.

Oregon's fine fescues crops (red, hard, chewing's) totaled 22 million lbs. in 2016.

Legume seed production in Oregon is centered on red and white clover, which saw red clover at 14 million lbs. and white clover @ 6.7 million lbs. Crimson clover, a widely grown clover in Oregon, saw its' production come in at 6.5 million lbs., a million lbs. below its' 10 yr. average. Total legume seed production came in at 34.6 million lbs., a 22.5% increase from 2015 and 6.3 million lbs. above the 10 year avg.

- **Price Quotes (in US $)**

All the major grass seed crops saw their price quotes at above 10 year average levels, although some species saw their prices fall from the previous year.

Of the big 3, annual ryegrass saw prices increase 13.8% from the previous year to 33 ¢/lb (10 year avg. price = 28.1 ¢/lb), while tall fescue prices remained unchanged from the previous year at 74 ¢/lb (10 year

avg. price = 62.4 ¢/lb). However, perennial ryegrass prices fell 2.4%, with average prices for the 2016 crop coming in at 82 ¢/lb., (2015/16 average price at 84 ¢/lb. with 10 year average price @ 70.7 ¢/lb).

Kentucky bluegrass quotes remained relatively unchanged from the previous year, with prices averaging $1.37/lb. Hard fescue and orchardgrass saw the most price improvement from the 14/15 crop with price increases of 27% and 22% respectively. (2016 Hard fescue price at $1.40/lb., orchardgrass price at $2.12/lb.).

Of interest to Canadian creeping red fescue growers, Oregon's price quotes for red fescue averaged $1.01/lb.(average 10 Year price @.83¢/lb). Oregon's' 2016 crop was at 9.5 million lbs.

Overall, with the exception of rough bluegrass, all Oregon grass species' price quotes are above their 10 year average.

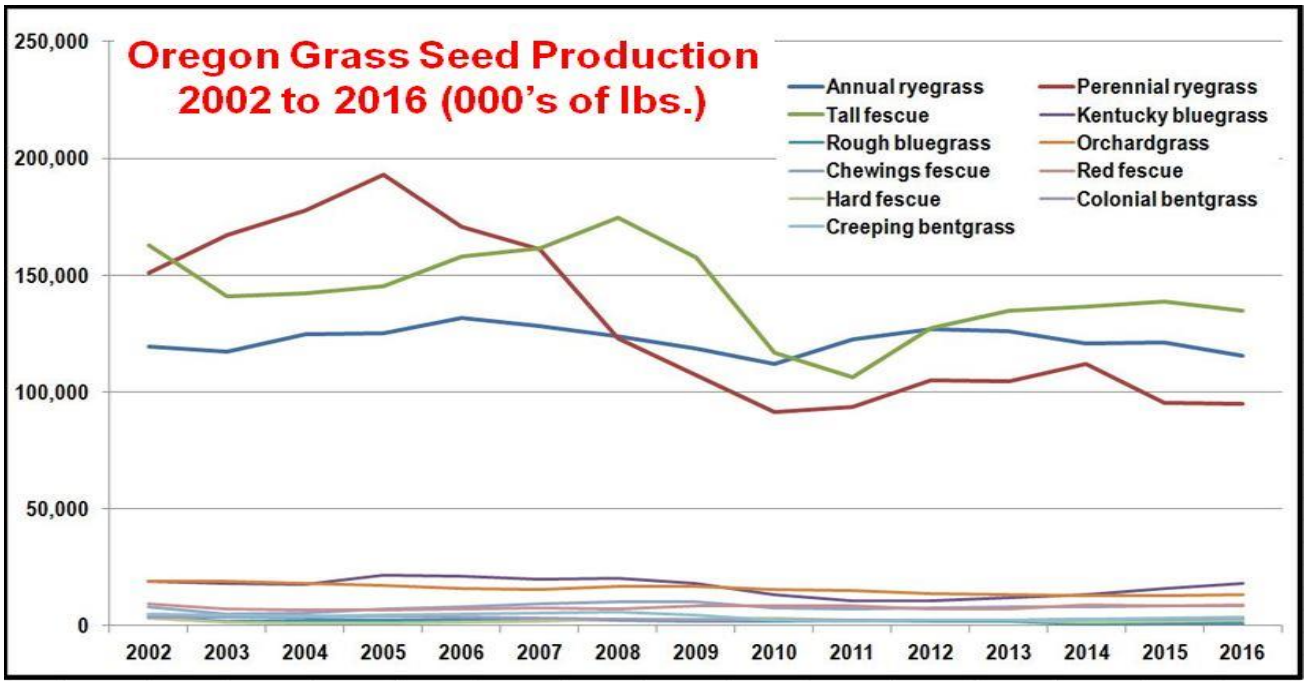
Summary:

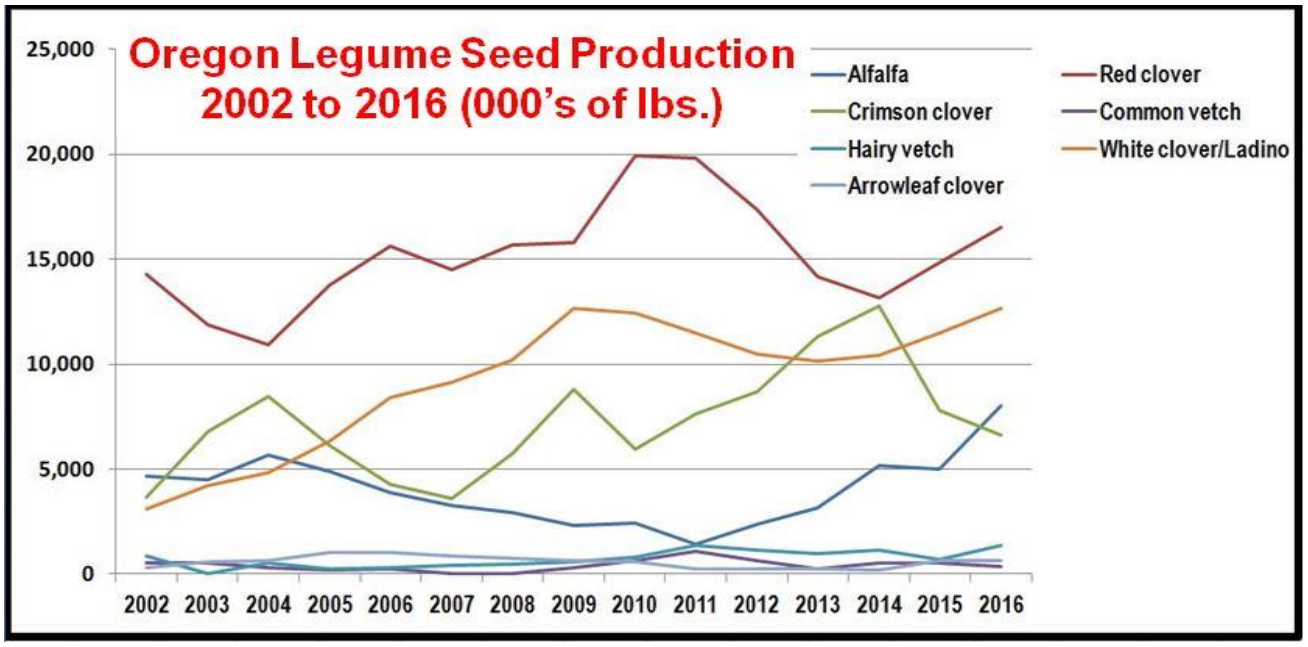
Oregon's grass and legume seed industry contributes immensely to her economy, with the grass seed sector contributing over $ 43 billion into the Oregon's farmer's pockets, with legume seed production adding another $5 billion. And, the importance of Oregon's contribution to the world grass and legume seed sector cannot be stressed enough. Not only is it the world's leader in production, it also leads in research, technology and in setting the direction the marketplace takes, especially turf seed markets.

The data presented in this article is collaboration between Oregon's government personnel, industry reps and grower groups, under the direction of Nicole Anderson, Assistant Professor, Oregon State University. This data is available at:

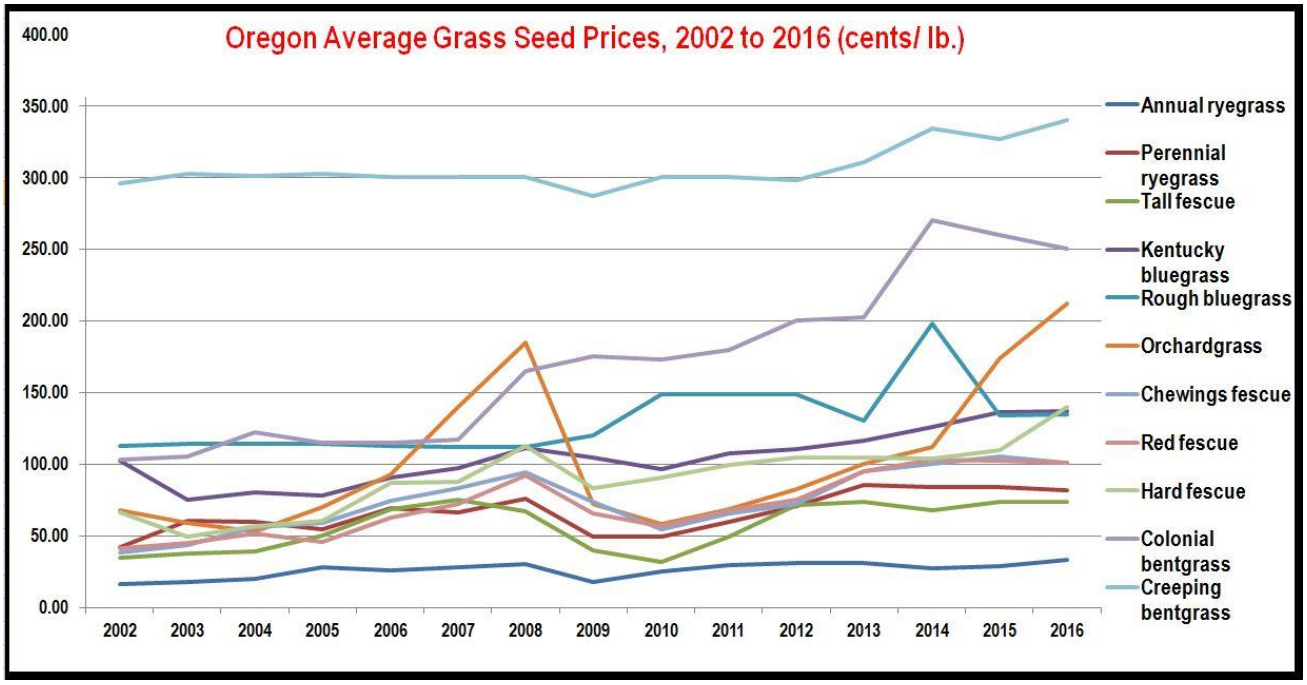
http://cropandsoil.oregonstate.edu/content/oregon-grass-and-legume-seed-production

- **Oregon Grass and Legume Seed Production Charts**





- **Oregon Average Prices (Grasses)**



- **Oregon Average Prices (Legumes)**