

Peace Region Grass and Legume Seed Market Update: Fall 2020

Overview:

The year 2020 will always be remembered by this generation as the “Year of Covid 19”. However, weather wise, it was another typical weather year in the Peace Country. “If you don’t like the weather, wait 15 minutes!”. Weather always influences crops, and this year was no exception. Spring turned into a welcome relief for most growers still having unharvested acres from last year, and still provided enough good spring weather to enable seeding of this year’s crops. Some areas remained wet though, with some acres going un-harvested and unseeded.

However, late spring rainfall in many parts of the Peace turned into daily rains, resulting in saturated and drenched fields. Good growing conditions mixed with strong winds and of course, showers, remained throughout the growing season. With no major harvest interruptions, grass and legume crops came off..... but most with lower than expected production. Some pockets in the region still reported good production, but overall, most growers and processors are reporting slightly below average production for most grass and legume seed crops.



Lucky for most Peace Region farmers, Mother Nature cooperated and we DID NOT have to go through this type of spring harvest!

Peace River Region Grass and Legume Seed Quotes (\$/lb.)						
	2019				2020	2020
	Jan	May	Sept	Dec	Apr	Nov
Alfalfa Common	0.67	0.65	.70 -.75	0.72	0.85	1.20 - 1.30
Alfalfa Certified	1.19	1.00-1.20	1.00-1.10	1.25-1.30	1.30-1.40	1.50 - 1.80
Alsike Common	1.13	1.05-1.15	1.00	0.94	1.00-1.15	.80 -1.00
Alsike Certified	1.38	1.10-1.20	1.10-1.15	1.05-1.10	1.15-1.30	.90 - 1.15
Sweet Clover Common	1.08	.50-.55	.35-.50	0.41	0.40	.40 - .50
Red Clover Common	1.25	.85-.90	.80 -.86	1.01	.95-1.00	.95 - 1.10
Smooth Brome Common	1.15	1.15-1.20	.85-1.15	0.99	1.00-1.15	1.30 - 1.70
Smooth Brome Certified	1.34	1.20-1.30	1.00-1.30	1.15	1.15-1.30	1.50 - 1.90
Meadow Brome Common	1.03	1.00-1.20	1.00-1.15	1.15	1.00-1.25	1.50 - 2.00
Meadow Brome Certified	1.06	1.20-1.40	1.15-1.30	1.30	1.10-1.45	1.60 - 2.10
Creeping Red Fescue-Com	0.52	.80-.90	.70 -.75	0.72	0.75	.65 - .70
Creeping Red Fescue-Cert	0.91	.80-.93	.72 -.80	0.70	0.80	0.75
Timothy Common	0.36	.35-.40	.30 -.45	0.41	0.45	.45 - .50
Timothy Certified	0.53	0.45	.45 -.55	0.55	0.55	.50 - .55

Turf Grass

The Peace region's **creeping red fescue** crops entered 2020 in good condition, with more than adequate rainfall last year, and helped by abundant late spring moisture. However, rains and lodging during pollination and harvest resulted in mixed results. Although some areas have reported a very good creeper crop, the majority of the region had substantially lower production, and as a result, a less than average crop was harvested. Creeping red fescue quotes had fallen to the 65 ¢ /lb. mark, but have now moved up to 70 ¢ /lb., with some processors expecting quotes to rise. Movement of contracted seed has been reported as very good this fall. Acres remain below average, and may remain so as wheat and canola prices remain good.

Forage Grasses

A dismal 2020 bromegrass crop in the region has really altered price quotes for the brome grasses.

Smooth bromegrass seed quotes, which were in the 95 ¢ /lb. to \$1.00 /lb. range this spring have moved up to the \$1.30 to \$1.70/lb. range, or even more. You may even have to "ASK" for a quote!

Meadow bromegrass quotes have moved up to the \$1.50 /lb. to as high as \$2.00 /lb. Until a better handle is had on 2020 production of these two crops, price quotes will remain very unstable.



Timothy pasture.

This year's **timothy** seed crop, reported to be average at best, has quotes in the 45 ¢ /lb. to 50 ¢ /lb. range. Certified seed is commanding a 5 ¢ /lb. to 10 ¢ /lb. premium.

Legume Seed

Although production is limited in this region, the big mover in the legume market has been **alfalfa** seed.

Price quotes for common alfalfa seed have jumped to the \$1.30/lb. mark, and depending upon the variety, certified seed is commanding a 20 ¢ /lb. to 30 ¢ /lb. premium.

Production of red and alsike clover seed is variable, again, this year. Some 2019 fields were harvested in the spring, but this year's crop production is still sketchy. Price quotes though, remain at previous levels, or slightly higher. **Alsike clover** quotes are in the 80 ¢ /lb. to \$1.00 /lb range, while **red clover** seed quotes remain in the 95 ¢ /lb. to \$1.10 /lb. range, depending upon quality. Some red clover fields are yet to be combined.



Summary

It doesn't appear as if Covid 19 had any big affect on turf grass seed sales this past year, as end use has been good. The bigger concern for the forage seed industry is the continued drop in grass and legume seed acres. Although not drastic, acres continue to fall. With farms getting bigger and bigger, today's' farmers are less willing to grow smaller crops, such as grass and legume seed, despite numerous advantages and spreading out of workloads. Unless prices in either traditional crops drop significantly, or grass

and legume seed prices do the opposite, expect grass and legume acres to become stable, or continue to decrease in upcoming years.



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