

FORAGE SEED NOTES



ALBERTA FORAGE SEED COUNCIL

April 1983

PLOWDOWN - ENCOURAGING RESULTS FROM THE PEACE RIVER AREA

by L. Gareau

Field trials to measure the yield increase of wheat and barley from the incorporation of a green clover crop the previous summer were supervised in 1981 and 1982 by Mike Rudakewich, Alberta Agriculture plant industry division supervisor for the Peace River Region.

The agronomic treatments and the yields obtained for each practice are summarized in Table 1.

Observations:

On the three sites producing wheat, the disc-incorporated green clover gave an average yield increase over summerfallow of 11.1 bushels per acre, while the clover worked down with the plow produced an average increase of 8.8 bushels per acre. At an assumed price of \$3.50/bu, the comparative added value of the wheat obtained directly from clover incorporated by disc and by plow were \$38.85 and \$30.80 per acre respectively.

On the three barley sites, the increased yields obtained averaged 6.7 bushels per acre after discdown and 12.6 bushels after plowdown. At a price of \$2.00/bu for barley, the net profits from clover incorporation were \$13.40 per acre and \$25.20 per acre respectively.

Considering the drought and other unfavorable crop growing conditions which prevailed throughout the Peace River region in 1981 and 1982, these results are impressive. While the trials may not have been conducted under strictly scientific experimental design for statistical analysis, the magnitude of the yield increase over summerfallow from clover plowdown clearly indicates the significance of the results. It speaks highly for this field husbandry practice which is well recognized by agronomists throughout the world, and recently advocated by the Alberta Forage Seed Council as "A Strategy for the Eighties".

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**Table 1. Summary of Red Clover Plowdown Trials in the Peace River Region
1981-82**

Plot Location	Fertilizer 1982	Crop Variety	1982 YIELDS IN BU/AC ON			1981 Plowdown Date
			1981 Fallow	1981 Clover Disc Down	1981 Clover Plowdown	
Manning	11-48-0 @ 75 lb	Thatcher Wheat	24	25.5	28.3	July 17
Brownvale	38 lb anhydrous + 50 lb 11-48-0 + K per acre	Fairfield Barley	30	45.5	65.0	July 3
Jean Cote	23-23-0 100 lb/ac	Thatcher Wheat	16.2	36.0	34.0	July 1
Valleyview	NIL	Neepawa Wheat	40.2	52.0	44.5	July 1
Eaglesham	11-48-0 @ 50 lb	Fairfield Barley	53.7	56.8	61.0	July 4
Wanham	26-13-0 @ 100 lb/ac	Betzes Barley	65	66.4	60.6	July 4

NOTES

1. The clover involved is red clover.
2. The tests were conducted on plots with each treatment described covering 1½ acres.
3. One of the test sites (Wanham) shows no yield response but in actual fact the red clover plowdown seeding to barley was much more uniform and advanced than the fallow. Thanks to late rains and a late frost the fallow treatment was able to recover and mature to match the yield.
4. More work is needed to further test soil types and treatments of red clover as an alternative to fallow.
5. Any residual yield measurements to follow for 1983.
6. Trials conducted by: Plant Industry - Fairview, Mike Rudakewich, Kees Kennema and Jim Zahara.

FORAGE SEED MARKET UPDATE

by Marcel Maisonneuve

An improvement in producer seed prices has become prevalent during the post 1982 harvest period. A decline in the production of many of the major forage seeds during the past season, coupled with low carryovers and strong demand had helped drive the price of seed upward.

Major demand factors having an impact on the forage seed market are the U.S. set-aside and PIK (payment in kind), an improved housing industry, as well as continued downward pressure on cereal and oilseed values because of high world stocks. The cyclical nature of the forage seed industry continues in harmony with market forces that have characterized it for many years.

Canadian public varieties and commercial seed continue to dominate the export trade from Canada and earn much needed business for our producers and exporters. The U.S. continues to be our largest customer with Europe becoming less important except for timothy seed where we have been successful in multiplying their proprietary varieties. Seed producers and handlers will carry very little seed stocks into 1983 and the market will become very sensitive to crop conditions that develop during the summer. High prices for forage seed relative to cereal and oilseed prices will result in heavy seedings this spring but will not have any impact until the 1984-85 crop year. The major economic factor will be the success of the U.S. in curbing burdensome