

Call of the Land for July 9 - 2008

Grass and Legume Seed Market update

Note: prices provided are grower prices, quoted by processors to growers after cleaning and dockage.

As the grass and legume sectors move into harvest mode, a couple factors are influencing the marketplace.

Retail movement of forages this spring was down, which was not a big surprise, as the livestock sector continues to struggle. Sales are reported to be down anywhere from 20 to 40 % of normal. With the retail season complete, and less than average spring sales, inventories of many species remain and will now be held into the fall.

The big factor affecting the turf seed side of things is early reports indicate a very good US grass seed crop being harvested now, in both Oregon and the mid-west. With the US economy still in the doldrums, this will create lower demand, which in turn could pressure our creeping red fescue prices.

In the turf grass sector, creeping red fescue quotes have backed off, down to the 65 to 68 cents/lb mark for fall deliveries. Until the US harvest gets completed and we have a better idea of their production, there will be pressure on creeping red fescue prices. What looked like a very promising crop coming out of winter, the Peace region's creeper crop is now dry, with a bumper crop now out of reach. Rain in the area will be needed soon to help finish the crop. With expected lower European certified seed production, certified Boreal creeping red fescue is still showing a 5 to 10 ¢/lb premium.

In the forage grass seed sector, prices have stabilized falling the spring run. Common meadow brome grass seed quotes remain strong, in the \$1.50-\$1.60/lb range, with certified Fleet meadow brome anywhere from \$1.70 to \$1.90. Inventories of meadow are very low. Common smooth brome grass seed quotes are in the \$1.10 to \$1.20/lb range, while certified Carlton is commanding a 10 to 15 ¢/lb premium. Common timothy remains around the 50 ¢/lb mark, with certified Climax timothy at 60 to 65 cents/lb.

On the legume side of thing, quotes have remained relatively unchanged. Sweet clover quotes remain strong at 30 ¢/lb, with alsike clover quotes around 35 – 45 ¢/lb. Red clover quotes are between 85¢/lb and \$1.00/lb, but acres for new production are down. Common alfalfa seed prices are quoted anywhere from 1.00 to \$1.25/lb, depending upon quality. But with the majority of alfalfa seed production in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, acres are down, as farmers there switched to more grain and oilseed crops.