

Alfalfa in Canada

CSTA Co-Existence Workshop

October 24, 2012

Canadian Forage and Grassland Association

Our Mission

Our mission is to promote the growth
of the forage and grassland sector
by advocating a sustainable and environmentally friendly industry.
This includes research and development,
market development and innovation
to enhance the industry's ability to
profitably produce and offer superior products
to our producers, and domestic and international consumers

www.canadianfga.ca

Canadian Forage Acreage & Livestock Numbers

2011 Census

'000 ac/head	2006	2011	2011/'06 %
Silage Corn	687	675	98
Tame Hay	19,962	16,943	85
Tame Pasture	14,071	13,671	97
Forage Seed	662	326	49
Beef Cows	5,082	3,849	75
Dairy Cows	996	963	97
Sheep	1,143	1,108	97

Forage Acres Eastern Canada

2011 Canada Census

000 acres	Canada	ON	PQ	MAR	TOTAL
S&T Pasture	13,669	649	312	148	1,109
Alfalfa & Mixes	11,233	1,346	675	112	2,133
<i>\$ Value @ 2.5t/ac and \$150 mt</i>	<i>\$4.2 B</i>	<i>\$505M</i>	<i>\$253M</i>	<i>\$42M</i>	<i>\$800M</i>
Other Tame Hay	5,711	731	1,219	373	2,323
Forage Seed	326	7.5	2.9	0.7	11.1

Forage Utilization

- Fed On Farm - ~85-90%
- Farm to Farm Sales - ~5-10%
- Export Sales - ~5%

Exported Forages, Hay & Clover

(\$ Million) Statistics Canada, March 2010

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Tim hay	104.8	123.4	77.4	75.1	53.6	48.8
Dehy Alf M & P	22.4	29.5	23.3	18.7	13.3	13.7
Dehy Alf cubes	15.3	17.2	17.2	11.7	5.5	7.3
Other Hay	7.4	9.4	13.1	9.9	4.9	9.0
Other Alfalfa - bales	6.0	7.7	10.8	7.2	2.6	17.7
Other	10.9	6.2	5.8	2.7	2.3	4
Total value	166.8	193.4	147.6	125.3	82.2	100.5

Forage and Grass Seed Exports

(\$ million) Statistics Canada, Mar 2010

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Per Rye	16.8	23.3	25.3	15.5	10.2	15.7
Creep Red Fes	27.0	26.4	25.1	16.2	9.1	7.2
Alfalfa not cert	17.6	26.6	25.0	21.4	16.8	15.7
Alfalfa cert	13.0	16.4	18.6	19.4	11.9	13.2
Other Forage	3.5	9.1	11.0	7.3	7.6	9.4
Other	38.2	38.0	39.8	26.4	20.9	38.4
Total Value	116.1	139.8	144.7	106.2	76.5	99.6

Importance of Alfalfa

- The single most predominate legume grown for forage in Canada
- High quality feed and a very productive plant
- Forage yields are falling behind Corn and soybeans (corn 2% per year over last 50 years)
- Partly due to lack of research
 - USA numbers
 - 7 alfalfa breeders - >200 corn breeders
 - 15 alfalfa researchers - 800 corn researchers

Establishment

- Majority Spring seeded
 - Some summer seeding
- Cover crop
 - Taken as green feed
 - Sometimes as grain
- Weed Control
 - 2,4DB
 - cutting

Management Practices - Dairy

- Dairy – Quality before Quantity
 - Late bud to very early bloom <5%
 - 3-4 cuts per year,
 - Some mixed dry cow and heifer hay up to 10% bloom
- Most harvested as haylage
 - Silage
 - Baleage
 - Dry hay

Management Practices - Beef

- Beef – Quantity over Quality
 - 10% to 50%+ bloom
 - 1-3 cuts per year
 - Dry hay
 - Baleage
 - Silage

Stand Characteristics

- 85-95% of plantings include grasses
- Dairy
 - 2-6 years ave 3-4 years
- Beef
 - 4-10 years ave 6 years
- Horse and sheep
 - Similar to beef

Volunteer & Feral Alfalfa

- Very few plants outside planted fields
- Alfalfa gets crowded out by competitive grasses, insects and disease
- Some pasture fields may have very old plants
- Alfalfa is not a very good seed producer in Eastern Canada although there are a number of insect species who will pollinate
- Auto-toxicity impacts seedling establishment
- Volunteer alfalfa occasionally in crop following