

August 11, 2015

The Hottest, Driest Season on Record

It's true! Oregon's hottest, driest summer on record continues. It has been 60 days since we last saw rain and three days since we last saw the temperature reach 100 degrees. Soil moisture is as low as anyone can remember. Our Research Station soil moisture reading hit zero at 16" down last week – with no rain in sight for possibly another two months. Very strange indeed.

The impact on all crops – seed, berries, wheat, wine is significant. Seed production has been impacted with a general reduction across all species. Light, fluffy seed is the rule of thumb. Below is a production report based on current crop information.

Annual Ryegrass: Yields off 25–30%. Prices moving upwards. Inventory on hand.

Perennial Ryegrass: Oregon – Yields off 15–20%. High inert levels impacting certification. Some fields that pollinated during extreme temperatures are down by 50%.

Canada/Minnesota – Producing acres reduced 35% from winter kill. Yields on remaining acres appear near normal. Later crop due to high moisture levels.

Limited old crop, but new crop arriving daily.

Fine Fescues: All species down by 20%. Third year yields declined more radically than normal. Grower prices moving up due to yield decline.

Some inventory to start the season.

Kentucky Bluegrass: Variety differences showing in yield reports. Large-seeded types did



better on average than smaller, elite varieties. Generally off by 20% – some midnight-types dropped to 50% of normal. There is a lack of interest in planting new varieties or additional acres.

Some inventory to start.

Tall Fescue: Yields off 15–20%. Light fluffy seed and higher than normal inert levels. Growers not agreeable to re-cleans due to loss of pounds.

Some inventory carry to start, new crop coming in daily.

Creeping Bentgrass: Harvest well underway. Cleaning delayed by other crops in the queue, but dirt weights show a wide variance from one field to another. Estimate is that crop is off by 30% but we need cleaned harvest weights to confirm.

It's good that we have inventory on hand of the leading varieties to get us through the next month.

The warehouse is ramping up and getting busy. Truck availability appears normal at present.

Avoid the fall crunch and order early.