

January 2013

Market Update

The holidays are behind us all and the blenders are running full steam ahead as we race towards Spring. Oregon has been warmer and wetter than normal so far, with mountain snows at good levels and rivers running over their banks several times since late October.

Species Shortages

Markets are dominated by varietal and species shortages. The world-wide competition for food crops has had a dramatic impact on planting selections here in the Willamette Valley. Diversification and return on investment are the drivers.

Alternatives to Grass Seed

Wheat is one alternative to grass seed, but vegetable and flower seeds, Hazelnut trees, berries of various types, cannery crops – they all have an impact on available acres for grasses. Canola is the latest addition to Oregon crops and despite wide-spread opposition from the specialty seed growers, Canola is now a limited option in Oregon as well.

Crop Yields

Crop 2012 yields are below normal. A striking example is Creeping Bentgrass. We had high expectations for this year's crop and expected that new variety shortages experienced last year would be eliminated. The fields looked healthy prior to pollination.

The average yield the prior four years was 880 lbs per acre.

Actual yields are 535 lbs per



Medinah Golf Course, renovated to Seed Research of Oregon varieties – greens, tees, fairways and roughs

acre. A 40% reduction is difficult to overcome, particularly when the carry-over was limited. Experts are still trying to figure out the crop shortfall, but regardless of the cause, the reductions are real.

Yield issues on Other Crops Abound

Perennial, Kentucky Blue, Tall Fescues, Fine Fescues, Zoysia, Bermudagrass – not one species was spared. Hence the strong markets.

Seed Coating

Last year we used Red Coat seed coating on 007 and Tyee, our top-selling varieties. This worked for some people, but not for others. Coating is not an option this year unless specifically requested well in advance. Given the crop information above, we do expect to sell out prior to the new crop in September. We will pro-rate sales based on historic purchases and do our best to provide you with these leading varieties.

Upcoming Shows

Look Seed Research up at the Golf Industry Show in San Diego and the Sports Turf Manager's Association meeting in Orlando.

Curtis Tyrell at the Distributor Luncheon

Our annual Distributor Luncheon at the Golf Industry Show will be on Tuesday February 5, and will feature Curtis Tyrell, Golf Course Superintendent at Medinah Country Club, home of the Ryder Cup last September. Additional topics covered will be Kentucky Bluegrass and Tall Fescue Drought performance, and a warm season update.

Here's to SPRING !