

Tips for Selling Forage Seed

Share your knowledge and tips for success.

Offer variety performance data to help your customers make the best decisions for their farms. Arm yourself with the data you and your staff need to be a forage expert. Gather data from provincial forage specialists and researchers, forage seed trials, and from your company's own research.

Selling is **80% listening** and 20% talking.

Understand your customer's needs and challenges. Ask what his biggest grazing challenge is:

- Getting cattle to pasture sooner or keeping them there longer?
- Renovating a poor stand?
- Seeding cultivated land to tame pasture?
- Establishing grass in alkaline soils?

Then help them to find the varieties or forage mixes that will best meet those needs.

Benefit selling.

Know four to five features and key benefits of each variety, and focus on the two or three benefits that help customers achieve their goals.

Help farmers make an informed decision.

Use your expertise to help the farmer make the best forage variety or mix selection for his or her business. Provide customers with research that shows the variety will suit their individual needs including soil type, environmental issues, and application such as grazing versus haying, or early, mid, or late season grazing.

Right seed, right **methods**.

You've sold the seed. Help your customer succeed - share information about the importance of seed bed preparation, seed placement, and the best methods for successful stand establishment.

Quality makes a difference.

Tell your customer that certified seed is all about quality. Show the blue tag and explain what it means in terms of production control and germination guarantees. Help the customer understand why he's made the best choice selecting certified seed rather than common seed, including guaranteed germination, adaptability to climatic conditions, and minimal weeds.

Invest in **tools**.

A forage stand rating chart and a cost-benefit calculator can help farmers make an informed choice when considering a variety of forage seeding options. Also have on hand a list of forage references and other local experts your customer can gather additional information from.

Stay in **contact**.

Make a courtesy call once the stand has had time to germinate. Is the customer satisfied with his choice, are there additional needs you can fill, or are there some problems that you need to address immediately? Find out about other planting intentions or grazing challenges.

seed ^{for} **MORE** **feed**
Pastures Profit with Certified Seed

How to Answer the Tough Questions

Your customer always asks the tough questions. Here are some answers to some of the most challenging ones.

Isn't it cheaper for me to use common forage seed?

There are several things you need to consider when comparing the costs of common versus certified seed:

1. With certified seed you are guaranteed varietal purity, so you can rest assured the variety you select for hardiness in your zone will be pure and perform as expected. There are hundreds of forage varieties in North America that can end up in common seed. Only a few are hardy to our extreme climate.
2. Certified seed is virtually weed-free, so you won't be introducing new weeds and additional competition for your seedlings.
3. Certified seed has been tested to ensure it is viable with excellent germination. Most common seed gives you no guarantee of germination, and you may have to seed at much higher rates to achieve the same seedling emergence.

What goes into the extra cost of certified forage seed?

In addition to getting top rate quality, you are getting a seed that has been grown under the strictest of purity standards. The seed grower uses isolation distances, hand roguing, and goes through extensive clean-out procedures of all equipment and storage facilities to ensure the variety you buy is pure. You also get the "Blue Tag", a symbol of clean, highly viable seed. With certified seed you also get innovation – newly adaptable varieties, disease and insect tolerance or resistance, cold-hardiness, and a whole lot more. By using certified seed you get peace of mind and the latest in forage technology, while contributing to innovation in future forage varieties as well.

Does it pay for me to reseed?

If you are looking at a poor stand rating, the answer is yes. If your stand rating is fair, reseeding or rejuvenating may be a good option. If your stand has an excellent or good rating then we certainly would not recommend reseeding, unless you want to introduce a new forage species to your stand. Reseeding in combination with the use of proper grazing management practices does pay in poor stands. Once the stand has been established it is critical that you use appropriate stocking rates, and give your pasture a rest. Other management practices, including rotational grazing and application of fertilizer, can also help build or maintain a healthy stand. Without a good management plan and execution, even the best stand will deteriorate.

Doesn't fertilizer pay greater dividends than reseeding?

Soil fertility is very important for forages as well as grain crops, but there are some things that fertilizer just can't do.

Reseeding offers solutions such as: repairing a depleted stand that is full of weeds; replacing legumes that have been choked out of the forage stand; extending your grazing season; and adding a tame pasture to complement your native pasture which needs a rest to replenish. Farmers need to consider several tools to maximize their pasture productivity. We encourage both seeding and feeding your pasture crop.

When should I reseed?

There isn't necessarily a specific time period for reseeding, but you need to consider several things. Due to plant dominance, populations of legumes such as alfalfa are usually reduced at about five years. Reseeding will be necessary to re-establish these valuable forage species.

In addition, repeated overgrazing or stress can put a pasture into a poor rating condition. If this occurs, reseeding may be your best solution to getting the pasture back into healthy production.

What is the most successful reseeding method?

First, use certified seed that has guaranteed germination and minimal weed seeds. There are also several methods that you can use to make the seeding process more successful. No-tillage methods preserve soil moisture for germination, reduce soil erosion, and contribute to a smoother pasture. Weed control is critical to reduce seedling competition and help preserve moisture. The seed bed must be properly prepared, seeding dates should take advantage of moisture and cool conditions, and seeding depth should be controlled.

seed ^{for} **MORE** **feed**
Pastures Profit with Certified Seed

seed for MORE feed

Reseeding Pastures

What it means to your farm

Does your pasture need a renovation?

Reseeding can reinvigorate an old, over-grazed pasture that has become nutritionally depleted or weed infested. Reseeding with certified seed can have a direct impact on:

- The productivity of your pasture,
- The condition of your animals, and
- The health of your business.

Gain More

Improve Pasture Productivity & Livestock Weight Gain

Tired pastures can limit your livestock's growth during the summer grazing season, so give your pasture a productivity boost. Comparative grazing studies have found that by using tame seeded pastures you can significantly boost your rate of gain.

	Natural Native Prairie Pasture	Grass-Legume Tame-Seeded Pasture	Complementary Grazing System*
Yearling Steer Average Daily Gain	1.26 lbs	2.19 lbs	1.90 lbs

Source: Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

* A complementary grazing system makes use of one or two small seeded acreages of tame pasture grazed in rotation with larger native pasture acreage.

In addition to livestock gains, reseeding can improve pasture productivity by increasing the carrying capacity of your existing pastures. In an Ontario study, reseeding increased pasture carrying capacity by 33% over a five year period – increasing calf gains/acre.

Protein Pays

Improve Forage Quality & Yield with a Legume

Legumes add nutritional value to your pasture. Reseeding or over-seeding a pasture with alfalfa can improve tame pasture quality, when those species are absent or at low levels in your existing forage stand or pasture.

- Saskatchewan research showed that by seeding a grass-legume mix into an established crested wheatgrass pasture, dry matter forage yield was increased by up to 35%.
- A Manitoba study found that the harvest samples from a native hay check showed 8% protein content, while samples from sod-seeded alfalfa ran 14% protein content.

One Month Longer

Extend Your Grazing Season with the Right Variety

Are you looking for ways to keep your livestock grazing longer? By seeding pastures or paddocks with early and late maturing forages, in combination with a rotational grazing system, you can extend your grazing season by nearly one month. That gets the cows on to pasture earlier, keeps them out longer, and gives your mid-season tame pasture or native pasture a much needed rest.

Double Your Yields

Reseeding is One Part of the Solution

To bring old pastures back up to peak production you should consider reseeding in combination with sound grazing management techniques and soil fertility enhancements. By reseeding along with a fertilized rotational grazing system, and utilizing an early and late maturing paddock to complement mid-season paddocks, researchers found that:

- Forage yield increased by 2 times over the continuously grazed check,
- Cow average daily gains increased by 17%, and
- Cow weight gain nearly doubled from 20.5 lbs/acre in the check to 39.3 lbs/acre in the rotational grazing system.

Pastures Profit with Certified Seed



Canada's Seed Partner

800-764-5487



306-569-4082



800-430-5955



800-661-3334



613-829-9527

seed for MORE feed

Your Seeding Decision

When should I reseed?

If you have a pasture that has a fair or poor condition rating, reseeding along with a change in pasture management can be one of your best choices.

To boost nutritional value, consider a grass-legume mix. As shown below, the proportion of legumes often declines in an existing tame stand after a few years of continuous grazing, so reseeding or over-seeding of these species will reinvigorate your pasture. By adding legumes you will increase the nutritional value of the pasture for your livestock, and add nitrogen and improve the soil condition of your pasture.

Forage Condition Classes

Condition	Criteria	Action
Poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33-49% of the potential yield for the area under the present growing season • <50% of production coming from desirable species • Vigour of desired species is low 	Terminate stand and reseed; change management practices
Fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50-59% of the potential yield for the area under the present growing season • 50-74% of production coming from desirable species • Vigour of desired species medium to low 	Change management practices; consider rejuvenation methods such as reseeding
Good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60-74% of the potential yield for the area under the present growing season • 75-90% of production coming from desirable species • Vigour of desired species high 	Fine tune management practices
Excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 75-100% of the potential yield for the area under the present growing season • At least 90% of production coming from desired species • Vigour of desired species high 	Maintain management practices

Adapted from G. Ehlert, Alberta Agriculture, 1990 and Kirychuk, Foster, Bowes and Larner, 1997.

Alfalfa Populations Decline Over Time

	% of Alfalfa in Stand
Year of planting	23%
Six years after seeding under continuous grazing	12%
Six years after seeding under rotational grazing	46%

Source: University of Alberta, Kinsella Ranch

Certified Seed Delivers Benefits

Once you decide to reseed, make a 'certified choice'. The "Blue Tag" of certified seed guarantees that your seed is not only hardy and well-adapted to your area but also has high seedling vigour and varietal purity. In addition, certified seed is nearly weed-free so you won't be introducing new weeds and competition for your forage seedlings.

With certified seed you get innovation – newly adaptable forage quality varieties, disease and insect tolerance or resistance, cold-hardiness, and a whole lot more. By using certified seed you get peace of mind and the latest in forage seed technology.

Check out the handy calculator on the back to help you evaluate the bottom line on reseeding your pasture.

Pastures Profit with Certified Seed



Canada's Seed Partner
800-764-5487



306-569-4082



800-430-5955



800-661-3334



613-829-9527

Will Reseeding Improve My Bottom Line?

Use this calculator to help you evaluate the bottom line on reseeding your pasture.

This dryland example shows that by burning off the old forage and reseeding an alfalfa-wheatgrass mix, using a zero-till drill, there is an estimated \$11/acre return over three years.

Return Per Acre (Southern Saskatchewan Dryland Example)

Treatment Costs	Est. Cost \$/acre	Your Cost \$/acre
Herbicide burn-off	\$10.00	
Seeding (zero-till disc)	\$14.00	
Seed (alfalfa/wheatgrass mix)	\$13.00	
Total Cost	\$37.00	
Value of Additional Forage (see corresponding calculations)	\$48.00	
Return per Acre	\$11.00	

Forage Value Assumptions	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Change in Production (%)	40%	45%	45%
Additional Forage Production (lb/acre)	1,600		
Value of Forage (\$/ton)	\$60.00		
Value of Additional Forage	\$48.00	\$48/acre = \$60/ton x 1,600lb/acre / 2,000lb/ton	

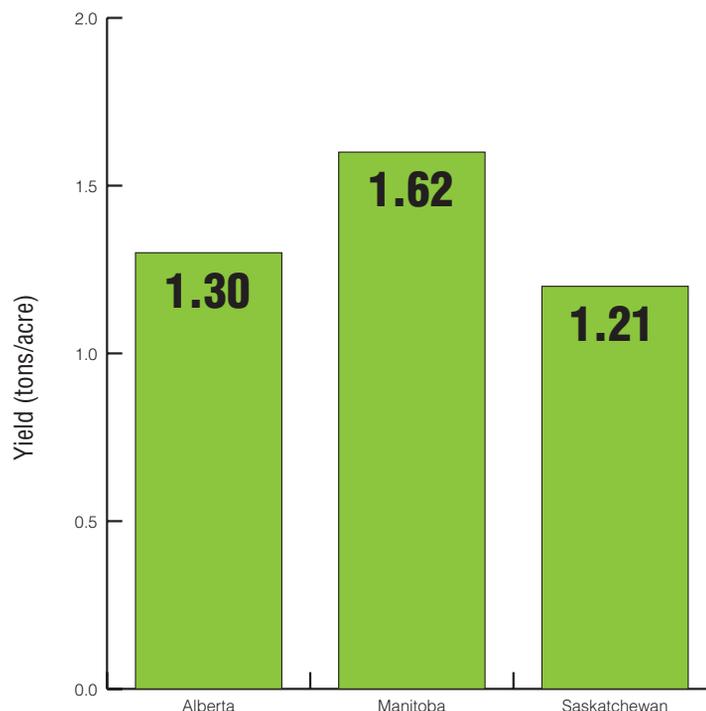
Adapted from *Rejuvenation of Tame Forages – Southern Saskatchewan, Saskatchewan Agriculture, Food and Rural Revitalization*.

Make an Informed Decision

Depending on the methods you choose, market value for forage in your area, and yield potential, your calculations will differ from those shown in the dryland Saskatchewan example above. Remember forage yields vary considerably across regions, providing even greater potential returns.

Use the expertise of a certified seed retailer to help choose the best forage variety or mix selection for your operation.

Tame Hay Forage Yields (Average 1998 - 2006)



Source: Canada Grains Council



800-764-5487



306-569-4082



800-430-5955



800-661-3334



613-829-9527