

## Grass and Legume Seed Estimates for 2007

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Once again I'm very pleased to be able provide our Extension estimates for grass and legume seed crops from the 2006-07 crop year. The process of gathering data on the value of all farm and ranch sales (estimates from each of Oregon's 36 counties) is under the leadership of Dr. Larry Burt, Extension Marketing Economist in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics (AREC).

These production statistics are currently available online through AREC's Oregon Agricultural Information Network (<http://oregonstate.edu/oain>) from 2007 back to 1976. This database contains county and state level statistics on all Oregon commodities. No password is needed for the guest login – just leave the password blank. Once you are beyond the login screen, there is a pull-down menu of multiple “canned” reports to choose from, or you may generate your own with the user defined report/query option. Generated files may be printed to screen or downloaded for use with any spreadsheet software.

Working with the AREC data source I have prepared summary tables presenting statistics on 2007's grass and legume seed acreage, production, and sales. In addition, data for 2005, 2006 and 2007 production are presented in three-year summary tables for both grasses and legumes. The combined value of all grass and legume seed crops in the 2006-07 crop year (\$503,573,000) increased 5.5% over the production in 2005-06 (\$477,408,000). This increase of over \$26 million in sales surpassed the industry's value beyond last year's historic high.

As stated above, the value of grass and legume seed crops in 2006 was \$503,573,000. Of this total, grass seed crops accounted for 95.3% (\$480,059,000); legume seed crops were valued at \$23,573,000 (4.7%). The value of all grass seed species increased 5.7% over the 2005-06 crop year, in spite of a decrease of 9,668 acres (1.8%) in 2006-07. Legume seed crop acreage decreased by 5.8% (1,955 acres) while the value of all legume species increased 1.9% over the previous year.

The increase in farm gate value seen in the 2006-07 crop year is due to largely to higher prices paid for most species. This year, all but two grass species saw increased prices paid to producers: orchardgrass (+50.7%), creeping red fescue (+14.8%), Chewings fescue (+12.2%), tall fescue (+9.8%), annual ryegrass (+7.7%), Kentucky bluegrass (+6.7%), Colonial bentgrass (+2.1%), and hard fescue (+0.3%). Creeping bentgrass prices were unchanged from last year and only perennial ryegrass (-3.8%) and rough bluegrass (-0.9%) declined in price compared to 2005-06.

In spite of there being 9,668 fewer acres of grass seed produced in 2006-07, shifts in species grown compared to the previous year found more acres of: hard fescue (+51.2%), Chewings fescue (+12.8%), creeping bentgrass (+6.1%), creeping red fescue (+4%), and tall fescue (+2.1%). Species with reduced acres in production this year included: Colonial bentgrass (-10%), Kentucky bluegrass (-7%), perennial ryegrass (-5.5%), annual ryegrass (-2.8%), and orchardgrass (-2.8%).

The combination of reduced acres and average to slightly higher seed yields (for most species) resulted in a small (0.4%) reduction in the total poundage of all grass seed species. The 2005-06 record crop of 788,882,000 pounds of seed was down by 3,371,000 pounds to 785,511,000 pounds this year. However, that level of production is still greater than the previous “2nd place” record of 776,303,000 pounds produced in the 1998-99 crop year.

Prices paid for all legume seed crops were higher except for common vetch, which was unchanged from one year ago. Increases in prices for species were: crimson clover (+56.7%), white clover (+15.7%), alfalfa (+12.4%), red clover (+12.2%), arrowleaf clover (+6.1%), and hairy vetch (+5.7%). Acreage of all species was lower in 2006-07 except for hairy vetch (+34.4%) and white clover (+8.7%). Total production of legume seeds was 2,613,000 pounds less (-12.3%) than in the 2005-06 crop year.