



“Annual Forage Variety Trial”

FORAGE VARIETY YIELD AND QUALITY DIFFERENCES

PROJECT NO.: 0008-016

RESEARCH INSTITUTION: Lakeland Agricultural Research Association

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Objectives: To determine:

1. Which varieties of barley, oats and triticale have the highest whole-plant forage yields in Northeastern Alberta,
2. Which varieties of barley, oats and triticale produce the highest quality cattle feed in Northeastern Alberta, and
3. If millet, peas, Italian ryegrass, fenugreek, or corn are economically feasible alternatives to conventional annual forage crops for whole-plant forage production and feed quality.

Background: Each of Alberta’s crop zones has agronomic and forage yield information for grasses and legume varieties. Grain yield data (but not forage yield data) is also reported for cereals, pulses, and oilseeds. Cattle producers making forage variety choices need more information. Firstly, forage yield is important, but varieties can also vary in feed quality (nutrient content and digestibility). Secondly, there is no forage yield or quality information available for annual crops. As a result, Alberta producers who are selecting forage varieties to seed for swath-grazing, silage or greenfeed do not have unbiased, third-party information regarding quality and yield.

These researchers are comparing 13 varieties of barley, 12 varieties of oats, five varieties of triticale, millet, peas and fenugreek (two varieties each) as well as corn, oats and Italian ryegrass (one variety each). Yield and forage quality (based on near infrared spectroscopy) will be compared among the varieties, along with production costs. Comparing performance and weather data among the three locations (Lac La Biche, St. Paul and Fort Kent) will help to develop variety selection recommendations for beef producers in Northeastern Alberta. This project is scheduled to be completed in 2011.

Implications of the Research: Providing beef producers with more complete information regarding forage yields, qualities and production costs will help them to identify the most appropriate forage variety to seed for swath grazing, silage or greenfeed.



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