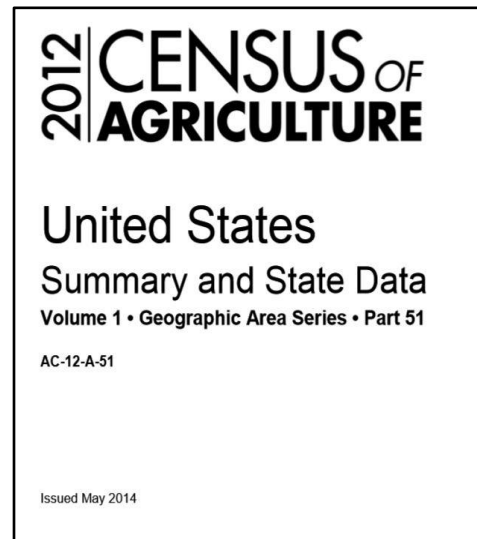


2012 USA Census of Agriculture: Grass and Legume Seed

Overview:

Every 5 years, the United States conducts a Census of Agriculture. Besides tradition crop and livestock production, this census goes into detail in regards to their grass and legume seed crops. Information from the 2012 census was released in 2014. With this information, a person can see the “snapshot” of the USA’s grass and legume seed situation for that year, and see what changes have occurred over the past five years (since the 2007 census). As with other USA agricultural sectors, one can observe the 2012 situation in the grass and legume sector in the USA, and look at what trends may be occurring in the industry. Only Oregon does an annual statistical survey of grass and legume seed annually, so this census of agriculture’s importance cannot be understated.

Note: due to confidentiality issues (i.e.: low reporting numbers), census data from some states are not available, making exact number totals unavailable. Although not exact, numbers presented here are believed to be within 2% of actual totals.



2012 Census of Agriculture: USA Summary

It is hoped that this 2012 census data on grass and legume seed production in the USA is just a “bump on the road”, as the 2012 Census showed grass and legume seed acres the lowest in the past 25 years (compared to the census’s of agriculture held in 1987, 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007). 2012’s acreage total of just under 760,000 was 420,000 acres less than recorded in the 2007 census! Compared to 2007, the 2012 census saw only 8 states growing over 10,000 acres worth of grass/legume seed. 2007 saw 13 states grow over 10,000 acres. However, in 1987, 23 states had over 10,000 acres worth of grass/legume seed.

At the other end of the spectrum, 11 states showed no grass/legume seed production in 2012, while another 16 states had under 1000 acres.

Only one state, Oregon, had over 100,000 acres of grass/legume seed in 2012. However, Oregon’s total acres of 420,000 acres was down by 136,000 acres from the 2007 census, and was 85% of the average of the previous 5 censuses. Missouri, which averaged 272,000 acres the previous 5 censuses, only had 77,000 acres in 2012 (28% of the 5 previous censuses average). California was the only state that showed an increase in acres of any amount, gaining 3000 acres from the previous census.



2012 USA Census of Agriculture: Grass/Legume Seed Acres (acres)									
State	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	1987-2007 Avg	2012 compared to 5 Previous Census (%)	2012 acreage change compared to 2007 (Ac's)
USA Total	1,725,279	1,093,389	1,326,478	1,422,133	1,177,100	758,994	1,348,878	56.3%	(418,106)
Oregon	402,154	432,378	522,711	545,519	556,876	420,767	491,928	85.5%	(136,109)
Missouri	325,003	187,044	316,743	355,850	176,138	76,749	272,156	28.2%	(99,389)
California	91,145	69,712	73,152	67,838	68,948	71,921	74,159	97.0%	2,973
Washington	80,728	63,570	71,993	81,548	81,081	44,173	75,784	58.3%	(36,908)
Idaho	99,067	77,598	81,635	94,130	70,933	32,111	84,673	37.9%	(38,822)
Minnesota	72,637	34,019	26,837	41,844	43,585	24,550	43,784	56.1%	(19,035)
Arizona	8,872	8,267	6,223	7,678	19,275	12,988	10,063	129.1%	(6,287)
Montana	90,238	18,101	22,346	22,086	31,008	11,869	36,756	32.3%	(19,139)
States < 10,000 Ac, 2012 (15)	424,425	154,687	165,535	165,330	109,638	59,957	203,923	29.4%	(49,681)
States < 1,000 Ac, 2012 (16)	130,231	47,633	38,811	39,944	19,515	6,089	55,227	11.0%	(13,483)
States = 0 Ac, 2012 (11)	0	0	0	0	0	-	0	0.0%	-
USA Total	1,725,279	1,093,389	1,326,478	1,422,133	1,177,100	758,994	1,348,878	56.3%	(418,106)
States < 10,000 Ac (15) = FL, WY, TX, KS, NV, AL, NE, SD, GA, UT, VA, CO, OK, AR, NC									
States < 1,000 Ac = NY, MI, SC, IA, KY, OH, MS, IL, PA, NM, ND, IN, WI, TN, LA, AK									
States = 0 Ac (11) = VT, WV, ME, MD, MA, NH, NJ, RI, CT, DE, HI									

Note: Table showing data for all states is located at the end of this article

2012 Census of Agriculture: By State

Oregon continues to lead not only the country, but the world, in grass and legume seed production. Although total acres in 2012 were down by 71,000 from the 2007 census, it still represented the largest production area in the world. Oregon's two major crops, both turf grass species, (ryegrass and fescue), occupied 227,000 and 132,000 acres respectively. Other crops grown in Oregon that had the most acres in the USA, included red clover (12,800 ac.), orchard grass (12,900 ac.), crimson clover (5,400 ac.) and bentgrass (4,300ac.). Grass/legume seed growers in Oregon fell by 22%, with 282 less growers in 2012.

2012 Census of Agriculture: Grass and Legume Seed							
	2012			2007			Acre change from 07 to 12
	Farms	Acres	Quantity	Farms	Acres	Quantity	
Ryegrass	585	227,975	400,880,936	762	289,230	490,229,604	(61,255)
Fescue	537	131,983	200,273,426	693	190,472	263,002,921	(58,489)
Orchardgrass	58	12,917	10,337,751	86	19,190	14,885,491	(6,273)
Red Clover	148	12,847	8,405,430	153	10,771	5,738,623	2,076
KBG	54	12,641	17,833,471	102	21,781	24,268,962	(9,140)
Crimson Clover	105	5,463	4,462,036	54	3,022	2,469,588	2,441
White Clover	26	4,672	2,116,924	26	3,740	1,445,066	932
Bentgrass	37	4,366	1,615,391	63	6,809	3,921,751	(2,443)
Alfalfa	28	4,216	3,409,526	32	4,959	3,183,375	(743)
Other	8	2,048	2,670,473	57	5,746	4,647,256	(3,698)
Vetch	22	1,153	1,069,927	19	766	544,118	387
Wheatgrass	-	-	-	1	x	x	
Bermudagrass	1	x	x	-	-	-	
Bromegrass	2	x	x	1	x	x	
Sudangrass	6	x	688,204	6	x	x	
Oregon Total	976	420,767	x	1,258	556,876	x	(136,109)

Note: Ryegrass = perennial and annual, fescue = tall and fine

Although **Missouri** held the distinction of having the 2nd most grass/legume seed acres in 2012 (76,700), it also showed an astounding drop of almost 100,000 acres from the 07' census. 2012 acres were only 28.2% of the average from the previous 5 censuses. Missouri grass/legume seed production relies primarily on tall fescue, which accounted for 97% of all her grass/legume seed production.

The 2012 census saw **California** pass Washington State as the number 3 grass/legume producing state in the USA. With almost 72,000 acres, California had 27,000 more acres than Washington, led by alfalfa seed and Bermuda grass seed production. **Washington** saw her acres drop significantly from 81,000 acres to 44,000 acres. This drop is mainly attributed to a decrease in Kentucky bluegrass seed production, as acres fell by 28,000 from 07'. Alfalfa seed production also fell by 5,000 acres.



Idaho, which held the number 5 position in 2007, saw acres fall by 39,000. 2012 saw Kentucky bluegrass seed acres fall from 52,000 to 20,300. Alfalfa seed acres fell to 6,700 acres (2007 acres at 12,800).

2012 Census of Agriculture: By Crop

Ryegrass: USA ryegrass seed production (census does **NOT** differentiate between annual and perennial in their census survey), is dominated by the state or **Oregon**. 2012 saw USA production acres of 244,000, with 228,000 being in Oregon. The majority of the ryegrass is of turf seed variety.

Fescue: Fescue seed production in the USA is dominated by **Oregon** and **Missouri**. Of the 214,000 acres found in the USA, Oregon grew 132,000 acres (61%), followed by Missouri with 74,000 (34%). However, Oregon fescue production is dominated by the turf tall fescues and fine fescues, whereas Missouri production centers around forage type tall fescue.



Alfalfa: The "Queen of the Legumes" saw acres come in at 85,000 acres, with 23 states showing alfalfa seed production in 2012. Production acres were led by **California** (mainly dormant varieties) with 40,000 acres, followed by **Washington** with 11,500 acres. Wyoming, Montana and Idaho all had over 6,000 acres, while another four states (Oregon, South Dakota, Utah and Arizona) had 2,000 plus acres.

Kentucky bluegrass: **Washington** (24,000 ac.), **Idaho** (20,000 ac.) and **Oregon** (12,600 ac) accounted for 99% of Kentucky bluegrass seed acres. However, this total (57,000 acres) was down from 2007's reported acres of 151,000! Minnesota, which had 57 growers in 2007, saw the number of growers drop to 11 in 2012.



Bermuda Grass: With acres estimated around 40,000 for the USA, Bermuda grass seed production is centered around **California** and **Arizona**. California and Arizona saw 68 and 29 growers respectively, and only two other states had 1 grower each. 2007 saw 12 states grow Bermuda grass seed on 37,000 acres.

Bromegrass: **Kansas** had 72% of the USA's bromegrass acres in 2012 (Kansas = 1,752 acres, USA = 2,400). Total American acres have fallen from 2007's 4,100 acres. 10 years earlier (2002), Kansas alone had almost 12,000 acres of bromegrass seed. Kansas's bromegrass crop is primarily smooth bromegrass.

Red Clover: This popular legume crop was grown in 18 states in 2012, led by **Oregon**, which had 12,800 acres of the USA total (16,400).

Missouri, with 1,200 acres, was the only other state with over 1000 acres. However in 2002, there were almost 44,000 acres of red clover seed production in the USA.



Timothy: Of interest to Canadians is the USA timothy production, which had declined to only 1,700 acres in the 2012 census. Idaho, New York, Pennsylvania and Washington accounted for the majority of production. **Minnesota**, once renowned for timothy seed production, saw only 1 grower in 2012. Production has fallen steadily in Minnesota, which had over 10,000 timothy seed acres in 2002.

Wheatgrasses: Wheatgrass seed production acres dropped dramatically in 2012, falling to only 4,800 acres (2007 = 20,700 ac.). **Montana** saw her acres fall from 14,158 to 1,667 in 2012. This however, still left Montana as the USA's number 1 state growing wheatgrass species, followed by **Idaho's** 1,460 acres.

Forage Grass Seed Production: Besides tall fescue forage varieties grown in Missouri and Kansas (75,000 acres), other forage grass seed species grown include orchardgrass (12,900 acres, almost all in Oregon), wheatgrasses (4,800 acres), bromegrass (2,400 acres, of which 1,750 acres found in Kansas), and timothy (1,700 acres). The demand for forage grass seed is expected to increase with North American beef cattle herd starting to increase again.

USA Forage Grass Seed Acres: 2012 vs 2007		
Crop	2012	2007
Bromegrass	2,412	4,121
Tall Fescue (Forage), estimated	76,000	183,000
Orchardgrass	12,917	20,688
Timothy, estimated	1,700	3,604
Wheatgrasses	4,748	20,684
Total	97,658	232,097

Summary: The downward trend in the USA for grass and legume seed production is not hers' to bear alone. With the rise in grain and oilseed commodity prices in recent years, growers throughout the world switched from grass and legume seed crops to more traditional crops. With low supplies of many species, market signal indicating better prices will have to happen to encourage growers to grow grass/legume seed again. Oregon will continue to carry the load of this production in the USA, but with the majority of her production centered on perennial ryegrass, tall fescue, and annual ryegrass, growers in other states may be asked to "step up to the plate" in this important grass and legume seed sector.

USA Census of Agriculture: Grass/Legume Seed Acres									
State	1987	1992	1997	2002	2007	2012	1987-2007 Avg	2012 compared to 5 Previous Census (%)	2012 acreage change compared to 2007 (Ac's)
USA Total	1,725,279	1,093,389	1,326,478	1,422,133	1,177,100	758,994	1,348,876	56.3%	(418,106)
Oregon	402,154	432,378	522,711	545,519	556,876	420,767	491,928	85.5%	(136,109)
Missouri	325,003	187,044	316,743	355,850	176,138	76,749	272,156	28.2%	(99,389)
California	91,145	69,712	73,152	67,838	68,948	71,921	74,159	97.0%	2,973
Washington	80,728	63,570	71,993	81,548	81,081	44,173	75,784	58.3%	(36,908)
Idaho	99,067	77,598	81,635	94,130	70,933	32,111	84,673	37.9%	(38,822)
Minnesota	72,637	34,019	26,837	41,844	43,585	24,550	43,784	56.1%	(19,035)
Arizona	8,872	8,267	6,223	7,678	19,275	12,988	10,063	129.1%	(6,287)
Montana	90,238	18,101	22,346	22,086	31,008	11,869	36,756	32.3%	(19,139)
Florida	31,668	35,824	20,688	20,131	14,264	8,924	24,515	36.4%	(5,340)
Wyoming	8,957	2,552	4,693	6,162	13,216	7,803	7,116	109.7%	(5,413)
Texas	16,797	20,814	10,340	8,818	13,397	6,419	14,033	45.7%	(6,978)
Kansas	58,460	16,749	24,094	54,589	15,667	5,477	33,912	16.2%	(10,190)
Nevada	12,977	10,189	12,099	8,557	6,898	4,361	10,144	38.7%	(2,537)
Alabama	10,424	5,557	5,723	5,449	3,732	3,922	6,177	63.5%	190
Nebraska	33,101	5,435	4,506	5,230	3,769	3,905	10,408	37.5%	136
South Dakota	172,308	12,032	25,036	7,575	10,784	3,767	45,547	8.3%	(7,017)
Georgia	7,993	7,496	5,473	8,007	6,414	3,668	7,077	51.8%	(2,746)
Utah	11,711	6,314	7,132	5,155	4,235	2,501	6,909	36.2%	(1,734)
Virginia	2,298	937	779	1,119	2,180	2,180	1,463	149.0%	-
Colorado	13,578	8,732	8,111	2,810	2,771	2,089	7,200	29.0%	(682)
Oklahoma	23,039	11,018	17,812	15,189	8,793	2,003	15,170	13.2%	(6,790)
Arkansas	17,464	9,208	17,127	11,976	2,734	1,849	11,702	15.8%	(885)
North Carolina	3,650	1,830	1,922	4,563	784	1,089	2,550	42.7%	305
New York	7,551	2,396	3,626	8,435	2,420	975	4,886	20.0%	(1,445)
Michigan	14,596	5,234	3,578	3,311	2,174	894	5,779	15.5%	(1,280)
South Carolina	5,360	3,548	3,100	1,640	1,033	816	2,936	27.8%	(217)
Iowa	5,358	2,401	2,458	2,757	1,111	556	2,817	19.7%	(555)
Kentucky	17,798	3,576	3,555	2,973	5,141	510	6,609	7.7%	(4,631)
Ohio	12,549	3,238	3,870	3,941	1,081	374	4,936	7.6%	(707)
Mississippi	2,267	806	497	1,645	1,147	347	1,272	27.3%	(800)
Illinois	15,209	8,654	4,437	2,354	1,029	332	6,337	5.2%	(697)
Pennsylvania	5,158	2,670	3,813	3,115	883	320	3,128	10.2%	(563)
New Mexico	3,404	2,405	437	1,094	741	283	1,616	17.5%	(458)
North Dakota	18,532	2,952	1,477	1,121	379	230	4,892	4.7%	(149)
Indiana	3,110	886	779	249	201	152	1,045	14.5%	(49)
Wisconsin	9,827	4,470	4,425	5,033	1,328	121	5,017	2.4%	(1,207)
Tennessee	7,802	2,627	1,888	1,952	510	68	2,956	2.3%	(442)
Louisiana	1,406	1,548	764		x	57	744	7.7%	
Alaska	304	222	107	324	337	54	259	20.9%	(283)
Vermont					32		6	0.0%	(32)
West Virginia	10	6	4		-		4	0.0%	
Maine			9		-		2	0.0%	
Maryland	671	215	362	274	-		304	0.0%	
Massachusetts	38	12	44		-		19	0.0%	
New Hampshire			12		-		2		
New Jersey	54	143	58		71		65		(71)
Rhode Island					-				
Connecticut					-				
Delaware					-				
Hawaii					-				
USA Total	1,725,279	1,093,389	1,326,478	1,422,133	1,177,100	761,174	1,348,876	56.4%	(415,926)

Major Crop Producing States: By Crop - 2012 (lbs.)							
State	Crop	2012			2007		
		Harvested			Harvested		
		Farms	Acres	Quantity	Farms	Acres	Quantity
California	Alfalfa	144	39,927	24,688,177	114	36,625	19,083,458
Washington	Alfalfa	55	11,485	10,285,708	82	17,127	10,860,608
Idaho	Alfalfa	59	6,704	6,849,043	92	12,788	9,346,709
Wyoming	Alfalfa	38	6,763	4,272,411	62	10,548	5,915,816
Oregon	Alfalfa	28	4,216	3,409,526	32	4,959	3,183,375
Nevada	Alfalfa	15	x	3,272,297	19	6,498	4,237
Montana	Alfalfa	65	6,277	2,045,008	80	10,338	3,729,635
USA	Alfalfa	569	85,058	56,467,849	786	120,505	57,127,901
Kansas	Bromegrass	33	1,752	332,602	39	3,220	558,633
Nebraska	Bromegrass	7	192	48,450	7	204	59,960
USA	Bromegrass	60	2,412	508,544	80	4,121	972,452
Oregon	Crimson Clover	105	5,463	4,462,036	54	3,022	2,469,588
USA	Crimson Clover	125	5,463	4,481,296	67	3,109	2,537,588
Missourri	Fescue	686	74,044	15,365,410	1,765	170,074	30,452,161
Oregon	Fescue	537	131,983	200,273,426	693	190,472	263,002,921
Washington	Fescue	27	5,052	8,958,453	26	3,601	4,762,252
USA	Fescue	1,354	213,798	225,635,663	2,917	382,578	303,083,054
Washington	KBG	96	24,254	16,669,281	140	52,269	31,141,242
Idaho	KBG	76	20,323	8,853,274	170	52,714	27,155,744
Oregon	KBG	54	12,641	17,833,471	102	21,781	24,268,962
USA	KBG	240	57,218	43,356,026	475	151,034	86,850,942
Oregon	Orchardgrass	58	12,917	10,337,751	86	19,190	14,885,491
USA	Orchardgrass	68	12,917	10,370,151	171	20,688	15,050,800
Oregon	Red Clover	148	12,847	8,405,430	153	10,771	5,738,623
Missourri	Red Clover	33	1,197	101,370	69	2,590	245,074
Ohio	Red Clover	24	318	42,895	32	1,055	141,893
USA	Red Clover	300	16,396	9,124,197	428	20,778	8,152,423
Oregon	Ryegrass	585	227,975	400,880,936	762	289,230	490,229,604
Minnesota	Ryegrass	38	13,155	9,179,743	58	12,300	8,898,982
Washington	Ryegrass	23	1,494	1,810,159	20	2,359	2,765,213
Texas	Ryegrass	16	178	129,500	38	609	120,066
USA	Ryegrass	700	244,660	412,492,138	968	305,854	502,830,947
New York	Timothy	18	479	69,830	13	179	30,480
Pennsylvania	Timothy	10	x	-	16	163	15,807
USA	Timothy	41	1,581	69,830	72	3,604	1,494,040
Montana	Wheatgrass	8	1,667	171,680	45	14,158	1,178,323
Idaho	Wheatgrass	7	1,460	528,753	5	898	138,183
USA	Wheatgrass	36	4,748	1,613,687	114	20,684	3,759,354
Oregon	White Clover	26	4,672	2,116,924	26	3,740	1,445,066
USA	White Clover	35	4,968	2,221,938	32	3,740	1,445,066

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