

Canadian Grass and legume Seed Data: 2016 Inspected Acres

Overview:

2016 saw Canadian pedigreed grass and legume growers have over 19,000 more acres inspected than the previous year, resulting in over 192,000 inspected acres. This 10.1% increase in acres has resulted in the highest total acreage in the past 10 years. With an increase in contracted certified seed production for use in end products, this increase in pedigreed acres was not unexpected, and has allowed for diversification on many Canadian farms. (Note: see footnote at bottom of article)

2016 Inspected Acres:

2016 saw Alberta lead the country as Canada's no. 1 producer of certified grass and legume seed. Alberta was led by over 46,000 acres of pedigreed alfalfa seed production (mostly grown in the Brooks-Lethbridge region) and over 11,000 acres of creeping red fescue seed production (grown in the Peace region).



Manitoba, Canada's 2nd largest pedigreed grass and legume seed producer, saw its acres led by pedigreed timothy seed productions' 22,877 acres. Timothy acres increased by over 2,000 to surpass perennial ryegrass (22,201 acres) as the number one produced pedigreed grass seed crop in the province. Alfalfa seed held down the # 3 position in Manitoba, with 15,753 acres grown.

Saskatchewan's pedigreed grass and legume seed production was led by her pedigreed alfalfa seed production (18,877 acres), followed by timothy seed, the clovers, bromegrasses, and perennial ryegrass (4,400 acres, 3,600 acres, 2,700 acres and 2,500 acres respectively).

British Columbia growers grew 3,700 acres of pedigreed grass seed in 2016. Ontario was the only other province in Canada growing pedigreed seed in 2016.

CFIA: 2016 Acres Applied For Inspection - Crop by Province, Acres													
Crop Kind	PEI	NS	NB	QUE	ONT	MB	SK	AB	BC	2016	2015	Change (+/) AC's	% change
Alfalfa						15,753	18,877	46,630		81,260	69,967	11,293	16.1%
Birdsfoot Trefoil						2,007	100			2,107	2,606	(499)	-19.1%
Bromegrass						660	2,720	5,932	560	9,872	6,685	3,187	47.7%
Clover						415	3,657	2,034		6,106	5,870	236	4.0%
Fescue						6,641	626	11,631	500	19,398	14,501	4,897	33.8%
Ryegrass						22,201	2,485	550	150	25,386	24,851	535	2.2%
Timothy				50		22,877	4,438	12,854	2,027	42,246	43,763	(1,517)	-3.5%
Wheatgrass						130	1,675	4,100	470	6,376	5,044	1,332	26.4%
Total				50		70,684	34,578	83,731	3,707	192,751	173,287	19,464	

Crops:

Alfalfa seed: Pedigreed Alfalfa seed acres across the Canadian prairies saw acres increase by almost 14%, resulting in over 81,000 acres in 2016. Alberta's acres rose by almost 10,000, while Manitoba and Saskatchewan showed moderate increases in their acres, 1,100 acres and 500 acres respectively. This year's total pedigreed alfalfa seed acres is the largest in the past 10 years. Pedigreed Canadian alfalfa seed acres have grown from 51,000 acres only 4 years ago (2013), and have actually increase each year since 2011. (2011 = 44,200 pedigreed acres). Canadian export data shows that for the 2015/16 trade year, exports of Canadian certified alfalfa seed had increased by 8.5 million lbs., up 67% from the previous year (to 21.58 million lbs.).

Timothy Seed: 2016 saw pedigreed timothy seed acres fall by over 3,000 acres in Alberta, while Manitoba acres increased by 2,500. End result, total Canadian pedigreed timothy acres fell by 1,500 acres from 2015. Manitoba's 22,900 acres is followed by Alberta acres at 12,800. Despite the fall in acres, 2016 still represents the 2nd largest pedigreed timothy seed crop grown in the past 10 years, second only to last years' 43,700 acres. With good production, timothy seed prices have fallen. 2015/16 Canadian export data shows certified timothy exports fell from the previous year. 2015/16 exports of 7.85 million lbs. of certified timothy was down 17.6% from 2014/15's exports of 9.52 million lbs.



Ryegrass: Pedigreed ryegrass acres, primarily perennial ryegrass, saw her inspected acres increase slightly in 2016, with 500 additional acres grown in Saskatchewan. The 25,300 acres grown in 2016 were above the 10 year average, but did not reach 30,000 acres, as had been recorded in 2010 and 2007.

Fescue: 2016 saw Canadian fescue acres increase by over 25%, with Alberta acres increasing by 3,600, while Manitoba acres rose by 1,400 acres. Alberta's acres are dominated by creeping red fescue, while Manitoba's acres are primarily tall fescue varieties. Total Canadian acres have almost doubled in the past 2 years, with 2016 acres 4,000 acres above the 10 year average.

Bromegrass: With the above average prices growers were receiving for bromegrass seed (both smooth bromegrass and meadow bromegrass), and with poor establishment conditions in 2013 and 2014, it was not unexpected to see pedigreed bromegrass seed acres finally expand, by almost 32% in 2016. Pedigreed seed acres rose by 3,200 acres, resulting in 9,800 acres inspected for certification.

FOUNDATION SEED SEMENCE FONDATION	
Kind / Espèce	
Variety / Variété	
Grade / Catégorie	
CROP CERT. No. / N° du cert. de récolte	
Lot No. / N° du lot	
MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATION OF OFFICIAL SEED CERTIFYING AGENCIES	
MEMBRE DE L'ASSOCIATION D'AGENCES OFFICIELLES DE CERTIFICATION DE SEMENCES	

Other Crop Notes:

Birdsfoot trefoil pedigreed acres continued to fall, with 500 less acres in 2016. 2016's acres of 2,107 was well down from 2012 and 2013's Canadian pedigreed birdsfoot trefoil acreage totals of 7,300 and 7,400 respectively.

Pedigreed clover seed acres (mainly red, alsike and sweet clover), saw acres rise by a meager 236 acres, following 2015 increase of 3,376 acres from 2014. Saskatchewan (3,600 acres) and Alberta (2,000 acres) continue to dominate production.

2016 saw pedigreed seed acres of the wheatgrasses increase by 21%, with an additional 750 acres in Alberta (2016 = 4,100 acres) and 600 acres in Saskatchewan (2016 = 1,675 acres).

Canadian Grass and Legume Seed, Inspected Acres, by Species (2007-2016)									
Year	Alfalfa	Birdsfoot Trefoil	Brome grass	Clover	Fescue	Ryegrass	Timothy	Wheat grass	Total CDN Acres
2007	62,872	5,248	12,795	5,343	20,284	30,181	37,439	9,029	183,190
2008	57,057	5,707	12,353	4,186	23,131	25,084	38,403	8,644	174,564
2009	49,159	4,206	10,075	4,123	17,826	19,456	33,582	6,808	145,235
2010	50,866	4,143	7,694	3,195	14,453	30,112	26,454	7,596	144,514
2011	44,116	5,010	6,434	3,600	10,422	24,074	26,025	6,319	126,001
2012	47,456	7,315	5,138	3,886	10,875	18,469	33,012	5,290	131,441
2013	51,018	7,442	5,587	4,247	12,039	15,564	37,582	3,857	137,336
2014	56,319	3,910	5,372	2,494	10,230	15,714	41,271	4,960	140,270
2015	69,967	2,606	6,685	5,870	14,501	24,851	43,763	5,044	173,287
2016	81,260	2,107	9,872	6,106	19,398	25,386	42,246	6,376	192,751
10 year avg (2007-2016)	57,009	4,769	8,200	4,305	15,316	22,889	35,978	6,392	135,584

Summary:

With pedigreed Canadian grass and legume seed acres hitting a 10 year high, demand for Canadian certified seed continues, primarily in the form of contracted certified seed production. As always, with an increase in acres there is the fear of over-production, which has already occurred in some species. However, pedigreed production of grass and legume seed will allow growers to continue to diversify their farm operations, and hopefully, continue to be profitable in the future.

Note: Due to Canada's Freedom of Information Act (FOIP), many plant types are not broken down to species level. The main Canadian grass/legume seed species applied for inspection include:

- Bromegrass: primarily meadow bromegrass, smooth bromegrass or hybrid bromegrass
- Fescue: primarily creeping red fescue, tall fescue, or meadow fescue
- Clover: primarily red clover, alsike clover, sweet clover, or white clover
- Ryegrass: primarily perennial ryegrass or annual ryegrass

- Wheatgrass: primarily crested wheatgrass, slender wheatgrass, northern wheatgrass, pubescent wheatgrass, or intermediate wheatgrass

Prepared by:

David Wong

BSc Ag., B.Ed., CACE

Jan 11, 2017

Beaverlodge Ab