

## Peace Region Grass and Legume Seed Market Update: Fall 2018

### Overview:

Following a “typical Peace Country summer”, grass and legume seed supplies are, at this time, basically unknown. With the exception of the grasses, there is still plenty of harvest to come. Weather over the summer, in general, was “normal”. A very quick snow melt allowed producers to get onto their land and get their annual crops seeded. The rest of the summer consisted of very hot temperatures, heavy rainfall via thunderstorms, decreased visibility due to heavy smoke from B.C.’s wildfires, rain at the wrong time, and rain at the right time. The only thing missing was a very early frost..... although the heavy early September snowfall made up for that! Overall, a typical summer weather scenario for the Peace!



With harvest still ongoing, market quotes are in quite a range right now. Good quality seed will still demand a premium. Two crops still show a glut in supplies, those being timothy seed and alfalfa seed. Despite lower acres of timothy, seed stocks are still plentiful, although it appears as if prices have bottomed out. With a huge alfalfa seed crop in the prairies last year, an over abundant supply of seed has kept alfalfa seed prices at very low price quotes.

Peace River Region Grass and Legume Seed Quotes (\$/lb.) 2013 - 2018										
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017			2018		
	Oct	Oct	Oct	Oct	Jan	May	Oct	Jan	May	Oct
Alfalfa Common	1.78	1.87	2.35	1.70	1.70	1.60	1.15	0.98	0.70	0.70
Alfalfa Certified	1.90	2.08	2.55	2.00	2.10	2.10	1.95	1.74	1.10	1.00*
Alsike Common	1.23	1.31	1.35	1.55	1.60	1.45	1.35	1.26	1.00	1.00-1.25
Alsike Certified	1.40	1.53	1.50	1.80	1.70	1.65	1.60	1.54	1.05	1.25-1.50
Sweet Clover Common	0.69	0.70	0.80	0.50	0.43	0.45	0.48	0.48	0.50	.45-.55
Red Clover Common	0.85	0.85	1.10	0.90	1.10	0.95	0.95	0.91	0.90	.80-1.00
Smooth Brome Common	1.30	1.63	3.05	1.55	1.60	1.40	1.25	1.20	1.00	1-1.25
Smooth Brome Certified	1.48	1.98	3.50	1.80	1.85	1.70	1.50	1.45	1.25	1.25-1.35
Meadow Brome Common	1.30	1.58	3.30	1.80	1.80	1.90	1.70	1.62	1.15	1.20-1.40
Meadow Brome Certified	1.53	1.90	3.40	2.10	2.20	2.20	1.85	1.87	1.30	1.35-1.55
Fescue Common	0.66	0.75	0.80	0.81	0.82	0.87	0.90	0.95	0.90	.95-1.05
Fescue Certified	0.70	0.79	0.85	0.84	0.84	0.90	0.95	1.00	0.95	1.05-1.15
Timothy Common	0.73	0.66	0.60	0.26	0.28	0.28	0.29	0.35	0.30	.30-.35
Timothy Certified	0.85	0.79	0.70	0.45	0.60	0.57	0.54	0.54	0.45	.50-.54*
= high quote for that year	= low quote for that year			* = variety dependent						

## Crops:

### Creeping Red Fescue.

“Creeper” quotes have started to rise, but with the trade still trying to estimate this year’s total production, prices are being quoted in the .95 ¢/lb. up to \$1.10/lb. Yields throughout the Peace region were well below average, with yields of 300 to 400 lbs./ac. considered a decent crop this year. This is the poorest crop in recent memory, and with low acres (compared to traditional long-term acres), this price rise is not unexpected. Spring quotes were at 90 ¢/lb. Oregon’s 2018 turf grass seed crop was good (average?), but very low carry-in supplies for most species, could help push prices higher. Canadian dollar continues to trade well below .80 to the US \$.

### Forage Grasses

2018 production of smooth brome grass, meadow brome grass and timothy seed crops, in the Peace region, could be considered average to slightly below depending on the area. However, with good production last year, supplies are adequate, resulting in price quotes being pressured down. Smooth brome quotes are in the dollar to \$1.25 range, while meadow brome quotes are anywhere from \$1.20 to \$1.40.

Timothy seed quotes have bottomed out in the 30 to 35 ¢/lb. range. The humongous timothy seed crop from a few years ago still has supplies lingering in growers and processors hands, but they have been slowly chewed into. One crop that is reported to have a big push upwards in quotes has been crested wheatgrass, with quotes of well over \$1.50/lb. heard in the market place.



### Legumes

With much of the clover seed crop yet to be harvested, and rains slowing down our traditional harvest, don’t expect combines to be rolling for a few weeks yet, and hopefully beat our winter snowfall. Red Clover seed quotes have remained steady, with quotes in the 80 ¢/lb. to \$1.00 range. Alsike seed quotes are reported to be in the \$1.00 to \$1.25 ¢/lb. range. However, with the 2018 crops still unharvested, these quotes could change quickly depending upon overall production, and quality.

2017 saw a huge alfalfa seed crop come off in Saskatchewan, and that overproduction is still hampering price quotes for this seed. Alfalfa quotes have fallen to 70 ¢/lb., good for end users, but not encouraging for those in the industry. Some growers, needing cash flow, have sold for less!



## Summary

2018 has seen typical trials and tribulations attributed to agriculture. Overproduction in one year has led to drops in prices, and overproduction one year (alfalfa/timothy seed) can be the opposite in other crops in another year (creeping red fescue).

However, although there isn't the abundant grass and legume seed acres as in the past, acres have remained steady the past few years, and hopefully keep this a viable and valuable industry going forward. Grass and legume seed production has paid the bills in the past, and should continue to do so in the future.

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