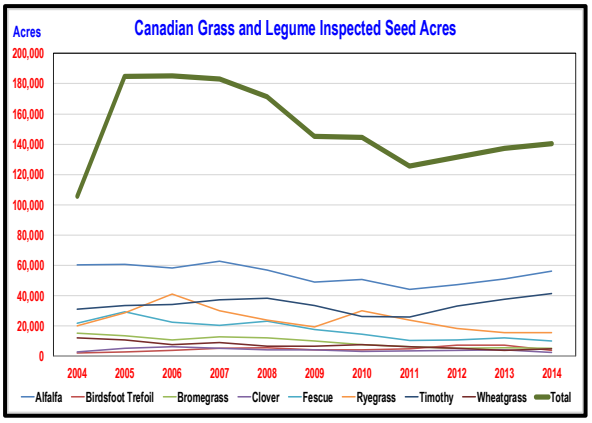
## Canadian Grass and Legume Seed Data: 2014 Inspected Acres

### Overview:




2014 saw certified acres of grass and legume seed, applied for inspection, rise again for the 3rd consecutive year, albeit marginally. Certified seed acres increased by 2,500 acres (2.1%) compared to 2013 acres, but trends can definitely be seen in this certified seed sector. Acres of certified turf grass species (fescue, ryegrass) continued to be pressured, while responses by farmers to higher legume (alfalfa, birds foot, clovers) seed prices, remained uncommitted. That is, in the forage grass seed and legume seed sectors, growers have not responded as much as expected due to high prices being quoted the past few years.

### 2014 Inspections:

Certified acres of grass and legume seed continues to be concentrated in Western Canada, with no acres inspected east of Manitoba. Alberta led the country in total inspected acres for the 2nd year in a row, although it only had 3,000 more acres than Manitoba (Alberta, 2014 = 56,641). Saskatchewan was the only province to show a decrease in certified acres in 2014, with growers dropping 1,700 acres from the previous year.

| CFIA: 2014 Acres Applied For Inspection - Crop by Province, Acres | | | | | | | Last Year | Change (+/-) Ac | % change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Crop | E Canada | MB | SK | AB | BC | 2014 | 2013 | | |
| Alfalfa | 0 | 13,089 | 15,628 | 27,602 | - | 56,319 | 51,018 | 5,301 | 10.4% |
| Birdsfoot Trefoil | 0 | 3,685 | 225 | | | 3,910 | 7,442 | (3,532) | -47.5% |
| Bromegrass | 0 | 665 | 1,202 | 3,315 | 190 | 5,372 | 5,587 | (215) | -3.8% |
| Clover | 0 | 544 | 665 | 1,285 | | 2,494 | 4,247 | (1,753) | -41.3% |
| Fescue | 0 | 3,638 | 220 | 4,952 | 1,420 | 10,230 | 12,039 | (1,809) | -15.0% |
| Ryegrass | 0 | 14,815 | 840 | | 59 | 15,714 | 15,564 | 150 | 1.0% |
| Timothy | 0 | 16,906 | 4,924 | 16,272 | 3,169 | 41,271 | 37,582 | 3,689 | 9.8% |
| Wheatgrass | 0 | 175 | 1,570 | 3,215 | | 4,960 | 3,857 | 1,103 | 28.6% |
| Total | 0 | 53,517 | 25,274 | 56,641 | 4,838 | 140,270 | 137,336 | 2,934 | 2.1% |

Alberta saw a total acreage increase of 1,100 acres from 2013, with alfalfa seed acres gaining 2,700 new acres (primarily in the Brooks AB. Region), while acres of creeping red fescue continued to fall. 2014 saw another acreage decrease of 1,800 acres in fescue. Timothy seed though, saw it acreage increase by 3,700 acres.

Despite historically high price quotes for clovers (red, alsike, sweet) and smooth brome grass, acres continued to fall. Alberta's clover seed acres fell by 400 acres (16.4%), while brome grass (smooth and meadow) saw acres drop by 324 (6%). However, 2014 saw 700 more wheatgrass seed acres applied for inspection.

Manitoba saw her total acres increase by 2,760 acres, due primarily to an increase in alfalfa seed acres (+2,760) and a decrease in birdsfoot trefoil acres (-2,400). Acres of ryegrass and brome grass also increased, by 978 (6.6%) and 192 (29%) respectively. Total inspected acres for Manitoba in 2014 was 53,517, up 5.4% from 2013.

## Crops:

The crops that showed the greatest increase in certification in 2014 were alfalfa seed and timothy seed. Alfalfa seed acres in Canada increased by 5,300 acres, while acres of timothy seed increased by nearly 3,700. The trend towards end users demanding more certified seed, and less common seed of these two species, has helped in increasing these two crops acreages. Alfalfa seed acres rose for the 5th consecutive year, while timothy seed acres are the highest in the past 10 year!

Wheatgrass seed acres increased substantially percentage wise, with acres across the prairies rising to 5,000. This acreage though, is still the 2nd lowest in the past 10 years.

Fescue seed acres, primarily referring to creeping red fescue, fell to its' lowest level in over 10 years. Likewise, ryegrass seed acres, mainly perennial rye, fell to its' second lowest level compared to the previous 10 years. 2006 saw over 41,000 acres grown, while 2014 saw seed acre levels drop to under 16,000.

Unlike its' forage grass brother timothy seed, the bromegrasses (smooth and meadow), saw a drop in acres, having its' 2nd lowest acreage level in the past 10 years. This despite record high seed quotes the previous few years for smooth bromegrass seed.

Clover seed production continues to fall. Saskatchewan, which once had over 2,700 acres of certified production, saw only 665 acres in 2014. Likewise, Manitoba's clover

seed production (2014 = 544 acres) is only half of her 10 year average (1,066 acres). Alberta production, which has constantly been reliable for steady clover seed supplies, saw its' certified seed acres fall to their lowest levels in at least the past 10 years. However, Alberta's production acres have been steady compared to the acreage fluctuations seen in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

| Canadian Certified Clover Seed Production | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ONT | MB | SK | AB | BC | Total |
| 2005 | 203 | 1,128 | 2,099 | 2,031 | 0 | 5,461 |
| 2006 | | 1,794 | 2,748 | 1,837 | | 6,379 |
| 2007 | | 1,661 | 1,867 | 1,814 | | 5,343 |
| 2008 | | 1,005 | 1,219 | 1,962 | | 4,186 |
| 2009 | | 1,202 | 1,622 | 1,300 | | 4,123 |
| 2010 | | 948 | 794 | 1,303 | 150 | 3,195 |
| 2011 | | 920 | 1,060 | 1,620 | | 3,600 |
| 2012 | | 942 | 1,008 | 1,936 | | 3,886 |
| 2013 | | 514 | 2,040 | 1,693 | | 4,247 |
| 2014 | | 544 | 665 | 1,285 | | 2,494 |
| 10 year average | | 1,066 | 1,512 | 1,678 | 15 | 4,291 |

| Crop | Canada: 2014 Acres Applied For Inspection - by Crop | | | | | | | | | | | Change | % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | (+/-) AC's | change |
| Alfalfa | 60,478 | 60,748 | 58,277 | 62,872 | 56,812 | 49,159 | 50,866 | 44,114 | 47,456 | 51,018 | 56,319 | 5,301 | 10.4% |
| Birdsfoot Trefoil | 2,269 | 2,859 | 3,784 | 5,248 | 5,707 | 4,206 | 4,143 | 5,010 | 7,315 | 7,442 | 3,910 | (3,532) | -47.5% |
| Bromegrass | 15,161 | 13,572 | 10,856 | 12,795 | 12,353 | 9,955 | 7,694 | 6,433 | 5,138 | 5,587 | 5,372 | (215) | -3.8% |
| Clover | 3,005 | 5,341 | 6,379 | 5,343 | 4,188 | 4,123 | 3,195 | 3,559 | 3,886 | 4,247 | 2,494 | (1,753) | -41.3% |
| Fescue | 21,817 | 29,227 | 22,521 | 20,284 | 23,131 | 17,826 | 14,453 | 10,422 | 10,875 | 12,039 | 10,230 | (1,809) | -15.0% |
| Ryegrass | 20,039 | 28,846 | 41,179 | 30,181 | 23,982 | 19,456 | 30,112 | 23,974 | 18,469 | 15,564 | 15,714 | 150 | 1.0% |
| Timothy | 31,136 | 33,573 | 34,296 | 37,439 | 38,403 | 33,582 | 26,454 | 25,918 | 33,012 | 37,582 | 41,271 | 3,689 | 9.8% |
| Wheatgrass | 12,053 | 10,633 | 7,774 | 9,029 | 6,784 | 6,808 | 7,596 | 6,248 | 5,290 | 3,857 | 4,960 | 1,103 | 28.6% |
| Total | 105,480 | 184,798 | 185,065 | 183,190 | 171,360 | 145,115 | 144,514 | 125,678 | 131,441 | 137,336 | 140,270 | 2,934 | 2.1% |

## Summary:

When you break down the use of grass and legume seed into either the turf grass or the forage sector, you can see where the demand now lies. With continued use of forages by the dairy industry worldwide, and the increasing numbers of livestock in North America (finally!), demand for legumes and forage grasses has started to improve. Its' now up to producers to respond to these market signals. To most

Canadian growers, the production of grass and legume seed is a small part of their operations, so what happens in other sectors of agricultural production (grains and oilseeds, livestock), has a greater influence on management decisions.

Canadian turf grass seed production continues to be reliant on what demand (and subsequent production contracts), comes from USA companies. And as end users continue to demand quality seed, more emphasis is being put on certified seed production and company specific varieties.

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