

Camas Prairie spring forage trials conclude after a three-year study

AT A GLANCE

North Central Idaho forage growers needed information on spring planted forage crops that would produce high quality and high yielding forage.

The Situation

Producing high quality and high yielding hay is a big challenge in the North Central Idaho region. Most years the forage is at its optimum quality in early June and should be harvested at this time. However, the weather is usually wet at that time of year and hay harvest is postponed until late June or early July when drying conditions are favorable. Protein and energy levels are thus lower due to grasses and legumes being at a more mature growth stage.

Cattle production is an important enterprise ranking in the top two for gross farm gate receipts in the five-county area of North Central Idaho. Hay production is crucial to the cattle industry and planting more annual spring forage crops will help supply this forage need plus provide cereal producers and alternative to other spring planted crops.

Our Response

Research trials were conducted analyzing various spring planted crops for hay and forage production by University of Idaho Extension educators Jim Church, Doug Finkelnburg and Ken Hart. The research trials began in the spring of 2018 and concluded in the



Forage test plots on the Joe Chicane farm near Grangeville.

summer of 2020. Two research plots were seeded, one in Idaho County and one in Lewis County.

Program Outcomes

The spring seeded forage crops seeded were:

- Otana Oats
- Proleaf 234 Oats
- Everleaf 114 Oats
- Everleaf 126 Oats
- NZA 4.41 Oats
- Haybet Barley
- Stockford Barley

- Proso Millet
- German Millet
- Stockford Barley/Flex Peas Mix

Table 1. provides information on the varieties tested, the yield results, listed as dry matter produced along with the % crude protein, Total Digestible Nutrients (TDN) and the Relative Feed Value (RFV). Results are from the three-year period of 2018-2020, the end of the trial.

The Future

After three years of study, the spring planted forage trials have concluded. Information from this trial will be provided to producers via newsletters, popular press articles, grower meetings and classes, field days and in direct consultation when requested.

Table 1. Camas Prairie Annual forage hay Trial Results 2018-2020 (five site years)

Entry	Yield Dry Ton/Acres		Protein %		TDN %		RFV	
Otanás	3.17	a	9.1	abc	55.9	de	90	cd
Proleaf 234	3.04	a	9	bc	55	e	87	d
Everleaf 114	2.85	ab	9.5	ab	57.6	abc	97	b
Proleaf 234/Flex	2.84	ab	9.8	a	57.7	abc	86	d
Everleaf 126	2.82	ab	9.1	bc	56.6	cd	94	bc
Stockford	2.53	bc	8.8	c	57.1	bc	106	a
NZA 4.14	2.49	bc	9.3	abc	58.1	abc	98	b
Stockford/Flex	2.4	c	9.1	bc	58.4	abc	105	a
Average	2.77		9.2		57.1		95	
LSD (.05)	0.37		0.7		1.1		6.2	
CV (%)	20		11		3		9	

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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44-20-jchurch-forage-trials • 11/20