



Seed News

Seed Availability

Grower reports indicate that 2013 was a fairly good year for commercial seed production of most grass and forb species across the Northern Great Plains. This should help to enhance what was a dwindling supply of many species, an outcome of the 2012 drought. This is true as well for the foundation seed inventory at the Bismarck PMC. With the exception of a couple species, there is a fair to excellent supply of foundation seed varieties/species that are listed on the current price list included on the next page. Commercial seed prices appear to be quite similar to last year, with the exception of those few species that still may be in short supply. Current crop vs. livestock economics, and new provisions and programs within the recently approved 2014 farm bill may spark greater interest in increasing acreages of grasses and forbs for utilization by livestock, wildlife, and pollinators. Given that consideration, it would seem prudent for landowners and producers to secure their seed from reputable growers as soon as possible to ensure availability for 2014 seeding.

'Manifest' Intermediate Wheatgrass Now Available From Commercial Vendors

Commercial seed of 'Manifest' intermediate wheatgrass (*Thinopyrum intermedium*), a 2007 release, is now available from vendors for the 2014 planting season. Seed production was good in 2013, resulting in substantial quantities of Manifest available in the marketplace for landowners and producers interested in establishing this variety. Manifest is a long-lived, cool-season, introduced species which establishes quite easily as compared to most grasses. It was developed for higher tiller density by the Northern Great Plains Research Laboratory in Mandan, ND, and released cooperatively with the Bismarck PMC. Manifest produces high amounts of good quality forage, and is also a good seed producer, with

seed yields of 300-500 lbs/ac not uncommon. The PMC has a good supply of Manifest foundation seed available for commercial growers as well. We continue to include and promote it in our off-Center field trials and education/demonstration plantings in the three-state area.



Foundation seed production field at the Bismarck Plant Materials Center

Who We Are

The Bismarck Plant Materials Center (PMC) is one of 27 PMCs operated by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The Bismarck PMC serves the States of Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota. It is the mission of the plant materials program to develop plant materials and plant science technology for the conservation of our natural resources. The Bismarck PMC was established in 1954 as part of the Soil Conservation Service, now Natural Resources Conservation Service.

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Potential PMC Plant Releases

Plant evaluation, selection and release continue to be important functions of the Bismarck Plant Materials Program. PMC releases provide producers and landowners with improved sources of grasses, forbs and trees adapted to the Northern Great Plains environment. The following species are currently being evaluated for possible future release from the Bismarck PMC:

Virginia wildrye (*Elymus virginicus*): A composite of material with ND, SD, and MN origins comprises the breeder population. A seed production field planted in 2013 is expected to produce seed in 2014. Conservation field trials to compare the selected population with the cultivar 'Omaha' are being planned for spring of 2014. Trials to evaluate the species as a weed control measure in new tree plantings are also being planned for 2014.

Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum nutans*): A breeder population from 25 MN sources is producing seed at the PMC. The population is much leafier than the cultivar 'Tomahawk'. A seed production field was planted in 2013. Additional data will be collected on the breeder population in 2014.

Prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*): Seed selected from SD, ND, and MN populations was grown to produce the breeder population. Large seed was selected as a means to improve poor seedling vigor and improve establishment. Breeder seed was harvested in 2012 and 2013. An establishment trial and seed increase field will be planted in 2014.

Prairie sandreed (*Calamovilfa longifolia*): Selections with MN origins comprise the

breeder population. Plants selected showed some tolerance to foliar and stem diseases. Breeder seed was produced in 2013. Trials will be seeded in 2014 to compare performance of the releases Koch and Goshen to the Bismarck PMC selection.

Sand bluestem (*Andropogon hallii*): No release of sand bluestem consistently produces viable seed in the Northern Great Plains. Plants from a small assembly at the PMC that produced seed were designated as a breeder population in 2012. Some of the selected plants exhibited big bluestem characteristics, so were eliminated from the population. The PMC is continuing with further evaluation and selection to choose a breeder population.

Cupplant (*Silphium perfoliatum*): It is a perennial forb native to the tall grass prairie region of the Great Plains. It is a square-stemmed plant found in lowland prairies and open woodlands, and in North and South Dakota is native only in extreme eastern portions. Cupplant can grow to 7 feet tall, and is a plant that attracts various pollinator species. The seed source is from a Ransom County, ND location, considered the northern edge of cupplant's natural range. Plant evaluation and seed increase at the PMC will continue for the next 3-5 years. Depending on plant performance, a northern origin release will be considered.

Foundation Seed Order Information 2014

Listed are prices of Foundation and Select Class grass and forb seed produced by the Bismarck PMC. The seed is for sale through NDSU Foundation Seedstocks to commercial seed growers for the sole purpose of certified seed production. To order seed, contact Wayne.Markegard@nd.usda.gov or call (701) 530-2075. All seed prices are subject to change. Once ordered, a confirmation letter will be sent from the PMC and billing will be sent from NDSU Foundation Seedstocks. Payment in full to NDSU Foundation Seedstocks must be received before seed shipment. If payment is not received within 30 days, the order will be cancelled. Prices are based on a Pure Live Seed (PLS) pound. Shipping charges (in the U.S.) will be \$1.00/PLS pound.

Vendor Lists

The PMC continues to maintain the [Conservation Seed/Plant Vendors List](#). This list can be found under [Publications](#) on the [Bismarck PMC homepage](#). If you are aware of additional providers that should be considered for this list or the [Prairie Landscaping Seed/Plant Vendors List](#), please contact the PMC with that information.

RELEASES	CLASS*	COMMON NAME	COST/PLS LB
Native Warm-Season Grasses			U. S. Dollars
Badlands Ecotype	Select (G2)	little bluestem	21.00
Itasca Germplasm	Select (G2)	little bluestem	21.00
Bad River Ecotype	Select (G2)	blue grama	25.00
Bison	Foundation	big bluestem	13.00
Bonilla	Foundation	big bluestem	13.00
Bounty Germplasm	Select (G1)	big bluestem	13.00
Dacotah	Foundation	switchgrass	9.00
Forestburg	Foundation	switchgrass	9.00
Pierre	Foundation	sideoats grama	15.00
Red River Germplasm	Select (G1)	prairie cordgrass	85.00
Tomahawk	Foundation	Indiangrass	18.00
Native Cool-Season Grasses			
Lodorm	Foundation	green needlegrass	**
Mandan	Foundation	Canada wildrye	13.00
Rodan	Foundation	western wheatgrass	10.00
Introduced Grasses			
Mankota	Foundation	Russian wildrye	8.00
Nordan	Foundation	crested wheatgrass	5.00
Manifest	Foundation	intermediate wheatgrass	7.00
Manska	Foundation	pubescent wheatgrass	**
Reliant	Foundation	intermediate wheatgrass	6.00
Native Forbs/Legumes			
Bismarck Germplasm	Select (G1)	narrow-leaved purple coneflower	250.00
Bismarck Germplasm	Select (G1)	purple prairieclover	30.00
Bismarck Germplasm	Select (G1)	stiff sunflower	300.00
Medicine Creek Germplasm	Select (G1)	Maximilian sunflower	50.00

*Generation number for select class materials is shown in parentheses (G1 = generation 1).

**Contact us for availability.

Farm Bill Focus on Pollinator Habitat

USDA and NRCS are increasing efforts to support honeybee health by providing incentives for producers and landowners to create or improve pollinator habitat. The new Farm Bill includes program cost share funding to establish plant species that promote honeybee forage for resident honeybees and migratory beekeepers who summer their bees from June through September in this part of the country. There are a variety of program options that promote seeding of annual and/or perennial legumes, wildflowers, shrubs, in a typical field setting, or as annual cover crops. This new program will enhance the demand for additional native plant species approved for pollinator plantings.