

BIRDSFOOT TREFOIL

Birdsfoot trefoil is an excellent non-bloating pasture legume that can also be harvested for hay and silage. It grows under a wide range of soil conditions, and persists longer and performs better than other legumes under poor soil conditions such as low fertility, acidity and poor drainage. It is also persistent when grown with Kentucky bluegrass, reed canarygrass and timothy.

Performance trials of birdsfoot trefoil were established at Rosemount in 1994, 1998 and 1999 and in Grand Rapids in 1994 and 1998. The trials were harvested twice at Grand Rapids and three times at Rosemount also except in 1999 when Rosemount was only harvested twice. Yields are generally lower at Grand Rapids than Rosemount due to a shorter growing season.

Roseau and Nueltin, two varieties that have increased natural tolerance to the herbicide Roundup, will be on the market soon. Steadfast, a rhizomatous birdsfoot trefoil released in Missouri, was significantly lower yielding than other varieties in the trial and may not be winterhardy enough to be grown in Minnesota.

Winterhardy varieties such as Norcen produced the highest overall yields. Norcen was released in 1983 by the agricultural experiment stations of Minnesota and six other states, has performed exceptionally well in grazing trials.

Birdsfoot Trefoil Planting Rate and Date

Bushel Weight, Pounds	60
Seeds/Pound.....	372,000
Planting Rate, Pounds/Acre	
Alone	8
In Mixtures.....	6
Planting Rate, Seeds Sq.Ft.	
Alone	70
In Mixtures.....	50
Planting Date.....	Early Spring or Summer

Dry matter yield, tons dry matter per acre, or birdsfoot trefoil varieties seeded at Grand Rapids and Rosemount.

Variety	Rosemount			Grand Rapids	
	1995-1996	1998	1999-2000	1995-96	1999-2000
Bright	–	3.6	3.6	–	–
Dawn	–	4.0	4.0	–	3.7
Empire	3.6	4.0	–	2.2	3.5
Fergus	–	3.9	–	–	–
Georgia 1	–	–	3.8	–	3.6
Leo	3.5	3.9	3.5	2.3	–
Norcen	3.6	4.3	3.9	2.2	3.6
Nueltin	3.3	3.7	3.6	–	3.6
Roseau	3.4	4.1	3.7	–	3.8
Steadfast	–	3.1	2.8	–	2.7
Trevig	–	4.1	–	–	–
Viking	3.8	3.8	3.9	2.2	3.6
Witt	3.5	4.0	3.6	–	–
LSD 5%	NS	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.3