

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 1998, 1999 and 2001 and at Grand Rapids in 1998 and 2001. The trials were harvested twice at Grand Rapids and three times at Rosemount, except in 1999 and 2001 when Rosemount was only harvested twice as well.

Roseau and Nueltin are two varieties that have increased natural tolerance to the herbicide Roundup. Steadfast, a rhizomatous birdsfoot trefoil released by the University of Missouri and USDA-ARS, was lower yielding than other varieties in the trial and may not be winter-hardy enough to be grown in Minnesota.

Winterhardy varieties, such as Norcen, generally produce the highest consistent

overall yields. Norcen, 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	65
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, in tons dry matter per acre, of birdsfoot trefoil varieties seeded at two locations.

Variety	% stand *	Rosemount			Grand Rapids	
		1998	1999-2001	2002	1999-2001	2002-2003
Bright	—	3.6	3.1	—	—	—
Dawn	48	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.8	2.8
Empire	—	4.0	—	—	4.4	—
Fergus	—	3.9	—	—	—	—
Georgia 1	—	—	3.6	—	4.6	2.3
Leo	—	3.9	3.1	—	—	—
Norcen	56	4.3	3.5	3.9	4.8	2.8
Nueltin	43	3.7	3.1	4.0	4.2	2.8
Pardee	8	—	—	3.5	—	2.5
Roseau	72	4.1	3.4	4.1	4.6	2.7
Steadfast	—	3.1	2.7	—	3.5	—
Trevig	70	4.1	—	4.2	—	—
Viking	61	3.8	3.6	4.0	4.4	2.6
WITT	68	4	3.2	4.1	—	2.6
LSD 5%	21	0.5	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.3

Experimental design = RCB with 4 reps. 2-3 harvests per year. * % stand, low numbers had most winter injury.