Orchardgrass is often used in hay and pasture mixes with other grasses and legumes because it establishes rapidly and recovers quickly after grazing or harvesting. Its major limitation is a lack of winterhardiness, but it can persist and remain productive in areas with reliable snow cover.

Orchardgrass varieties were established in pure stands in 1997, 1998 and 2002 at Rosemount, and in 1998 and 2002 at Grand Rapids. Experimental plots were generally harvested three times per year at Rosemount and two or three times per year at Grand Rapids. Nitrogen was applied in the early spring and after the first and second harvest at rate of 50 pounds per acre for each application. Injury to all varieties was moderate to severe in 2003.

Experimental varietal trial plots were established at Grand Rapids in 1998, 1999 and 2001, and at Rosemount in 1996, 1999 and 2002. Harvest frequency is give some indication as to winterhardiness in the second production year.

Another benefit of red clover is its resistance to potato leaf-hopper injury. In 2003 a severe infestation at Rosemount resulted in injury to some varieties. Scarlett and Marathon had very little injury; Freedom and Arlington had severe chlorosis from the feeding insects.