



Reed Canarygrass

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Varietal Trials Results, January 2007



Reed canarygrass is adapted throughout Minnesota for use as hay, pasture and silage. It is one of the best grass species for poorly drained soils and tolerates flooding better than other cool-season grasses. While reed canarygrass utilizes nitrogen efficiently and is adapted to liquid manure application, its seedling vigor is not as good as that of other commonly used forage grasses.

The most recent developments in reed canarygrass breeding have been the release of varieties low in indole alkaloid concentrations. Both palatability and animal performance are improved dramatically when these varieties are grazed. Alkaloids are bitter, complex, nitrogen-containing anti-quality compounds.

In grazing trials, lambs and steers performed better on low-alkaloid varieties than on common reed canarygrass. Hay should be harvested between the boot and early heading stage because quality declines with maturity. Each of the varieties available is winterhardy and persistent in Minnesota.

Trials were established in pure stands in 1993, 1999 and 2002 at Grand Rapids and Rosemount. Trials are generally harvested three times per year at Rosemount and two times at Grand Rapids. Nitrogen was applied early in the spring and after the first two harvests at a rate of 50 pounds per acre per application.

Dry matter yields, in tons dry matter per acre, of reed canarygrass seeded at two locations in Minnesota.

Variety	Rosemount			Grand Rapids		
	1994-1996	2000-02	2003-05	1994-1996	2000-02	2003-05
Chiefton	—	3.7	5.3	—	4.9	1.7
Lara	3.0	—	—	—	—	—
Marathon	—	—	5.1	—	—	1.6
Palaton	3.1	3.8	5.1	3.5	4.8	1.6
Rival	—	3.8	4.9	—	4.6	1.6
Vantage	3.3	3.7	5.2	3.3	5.1	1.7
Venture	3.1	3.9	5.0	3.5	5.1	1.6
LSD 5%	NS	NS	0.3	NS	0.4	NS

Reed Canarygrass Planting Rate and Date

Bushel Weight, Pounds.....	46
Seeds/Pound.....	526,000
Planting Rate, Pounds/Acre	
Alone.....	7
In Mixtures.....	5
Planting Rate, Seeds/Sq. Ft.	
Alone.....	85
In Mixtures.....	60
Planting Date	
Alone.....	Early Spring or Late Summer
With Legumes.....	Use Date for Legume