

# TALL FESCUE

Tall fescue, a bunchgrass, may be planted in mixtures with other grasses and legumes. It establishes rapidly, withstands trampling, tolerates summer drought and produces fall-season pasture when other grasses become dormant.

Tall fescue is subject to winter injury, but it may remain productive in areas with reliable snow cover.

Animal performance is better when the variety grown is endophyte-free. Endophytes are fungi that invade plant tissues, reducing forage palatability and animal performance.

The wheatgrasses are valuable native forage species that are especially suitable for growing in the U.S. northern Great Plains area.

The variety Newhy is a wheatgrass x quackgrass hybrid. Wheatgrasses can produce excellent forage yields and sustained productivity under hay and pasture management systems, either in monoculture or in mixtures with alfalfa or other suitable legumes.

Recent releases of improved varieties have prompted interest in these species, especially in the drier western areas of Minnesota. Where rainfall is higher, tall fescue will outyield the wheatgrasses.

Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station scientists initiated performance trials of tall fescue and the wheatgrasses in 1992, 1997 and 1998.

The trials were harvested three times per year, and nitrogen was applied in the early spring and after each harvest at a rate of 50 pounds per acre.

## Tall Fescue Planting Rate and Date

Bushel Weight, Pounds .....	25
Seeds/Pound.....	229,000
Planting Rate, Pounds/Acre	
Alone .....	10
In Mixtures.....	4
Planting Rate, Seeds Sq.Ft.	
Alone .....	50
In Mixtures.....	20
Planting Date	
Alone.....	Early Spring or Summer
With Legumes .....	Use Date for Legume

### **Dry matter yields, in tons dry matter per acre, of tall fescue, wheatgrass and festuca-lolium hybrids seeded at three locations.**

Variety	Seedlot	Grand Rapids		Rosemount		Morris
		1994-1996	1999-2001	1993-1995	1998-2000	1993-1996
<b>Tall Fescue</b>						
Barcel	2874	3.0	—	5.3	—	4.5
Cajun	2884	—	4.9	—	5.3	—
Fawn	2873	3.3	—	4.9	—	5.0
Ky 31	2879	3.5	4.6	5.8	—	4.7
Ky 31-endophyte free*	2880	3.3	—	5.6	5.9	4.9
Martin	2885	3.6	4.9	5.3	4.8	4.7
Maximize	3154	—	4.6	—	5.1	—
Mozark	2883	3.5	4.8	5.4	5.5	4.8
Mustang	2872	2.7	4.3	4.7	4.9	—
Seine	3185	—	—	—	5.6	4.8
Stef	2333	3.3	—	5.3	—	—
<b>Festuca-Lolium Hybrids</b>						
Kemal	3166	—	3.8	—	3.3	—
Tandem II	3167	—	3.8	—	3.3	—
Spring Green(WFL-96)	3168	—	—	—	—	—
<b>Wheatgrasses</b>						
Manska	2869	2.9	—	4.0	—	4.8
Newhy	2878	2.7	—	3.92	4.2	—
Reliant	2870	3	—	4.2	—	5.0
LSD 5%		0.5	0.6	0.6	0.4	NS

\* Endophytes are fungi that invade plant tissues, reducing forage palatability and animal performance.