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EURO GRASS News, November 2008

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EURO GRASS

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MARKET

Keeping the course

During spring 2008, the perspectives for sufficient seed supply in Europe worsened significantly. Many production fields suffered from drought. In March 2008, the already low harvest expectations had to be downgraded considerably due to an all-time low acreage.

Fortunately, the drought period was followed by more favourable weather conditions. Some of the drought damage could be repaired, but nevertheless the yields per ha were below average and the total harvest amount appears to be by far not enough to furnish the European consumption.

Moderate demands in some European regions as well as overseas imports in some segments of the market might lead to the dangerous assessment that enough seed will be available. The facts, however, are clear enough:

- harvest amounts 2008 are on the same level as 2007
- as well as in 2007, the European seed balance is suffering a second year of severe undersupply in 2008

- the acreage 2009 will not reach the level of former times
- the harvest amounts are still below the expectations of February 2008

Facing these facts, it is obvious that values in the markets are to be kept. Assumptions of being supplied sustainably will likely lead to a situation that the many scarce products are finally lacking when urgently needed.

Taking care of a sustainable furnishing of the demands means keeping the course. Sustainable furnishing will only be possible when values are kept in the markets.



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INFO

Grass production in Europe – up or down?

The contracting of grass and clover seeds has been very difficult the last two years. And it will continue the next year as well. Many former seed producers have changed the production into cereals or canola. There were two main reasons for this change in production. For most arable farmers the increasing prices of cereals meant that they increased the cereals production because it was more profitable and a lot easier than seed production. And they were right, because the profit from crop 2007 was better in cereals than in seed production.

The other reason for the change into cereals is caused by the pig breeders. They increased the production as much as possible to be self supplied with fodder. It was a right decision on farm level because the economic

matter of the pig production is more important than the arable farming on the farm.

These are the two most important reasons why the production of grass and clover in 2007 and 2008 was lower than normal. The seed yield per hectare was also lower than normal in both 2007 and 2008. It means that the production in Europe was about 25 % lower than normal in both 2007 and 2008.

The estimated acreage for crop 2009 seems to be on the same low level as in 2007 and 2008.

Also for harvest 2010 there will be problems with contracting the grass and clover seeds because most of the European farmers have



been sowing more winter cereals than normal.

It means that the acreage for grass and clover seeds will be limited the next two years.



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PRODUCTS

COUNTRY – EURO GRASS’ international brand range for forage grass mixtures

Founded 1994 as a high quality programme for forage grass mixtures in Germany, COUNTRY will now conquer the international market for EURO GRASS. The high quality programme COUNTRY offers mixtures which are adapted to different kind of grassland use and different climatic conditions. All varieties used are at the top of international recommendation. Based on this ‘grassland philosophy’ COUNTRY became the biggest brand range programme for forage grass mixtures in Germany. It consists of mixtures for extensive to very intensive grassland use, ley farming, horse meadows and ecological grassland farming. For several years this

COUNTRY strategy works quite well in Poland too, therefore last year EURO GRASS decided to put COUNTRY on an international level. COUNTRY was established in the Baltic States for sowing in autumn 2008, other countries are in preparation. Look at www.eurograss.com, www.dsv-saaten.de or www.dsv-polska.pl for more details.



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INFO

Product managers – the specialists for all forage and turf grass questions

If you have questions about varieties, marketing of EURO GRASS products or about forage or turf grasses in general please ask our product managers. They are the interface between breeding, production and sales in EURO GRASS. Due to their close contacts to the breeders they are able to push up new varieties or interesting topics very fast. They support the area managers in all kind of marketing purposes to fulfil customer’s needs. So whenever you have more detailed questions about EURO GRASS products, please contact our specialists.

For the EURO GRASS homemarkets in Germany, the Netherlands and Denmark are responsible:

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BREEDING

AstonEnergy is leading in forage quality

There is no better perennial ryegrass in forage quality than AstonEnergy. These are the conclusions of the latest recommendations for perennial ryegrass in England and Wales. In contrast to most of the other European countries forage quality is a very important parameter in the official variety testing in England and Wales.

In 2008 AstonEnergy (intermediate, tetraploid) is the variety with the highest diges-

tibility on the list (D-value in mid summer under simulated grazing = 10.5, D-value at second silage cut = 9.8). Within the intermediate tetraploid group Aston Energy is 1 D-value unit better than the next best variety under simulated grazing and 2.7 units better than the average of all other varieties. Under the silage management Aston Energy is 1.4 D-value unit better than the next best variety under simulated grazing and 3 units better than the average of all other varieties.

What does this mean for the farmers? In situations where enough grass is available to satisfy animals increased appetite, improved digestibility has a very large effect on animal output and a one point increase in D-value can increase animal output by five percent!



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INFO

Turf mixture requirements

In Europe approximately 10 important grass species are used for turf purposes. *Lolium perenne*, *Festuca rubra*, *Poa pratensis* and *Festuca arundinacea* are good examples of the most important species.

Grass is not just grass. This statement applies especially for turf grasses. The different species have different characteristics and within the species there will be several varieties which also have different characteristics.

Some important subjects to take into consideration when compiling mixtures:

- Weather conditions (summer and winter temperature, rainfall, snowfall etc.)
- Local conditions (shade, sun, irrigation, etc.)
- Soil conditions (soil texture, heavy or light)
- Purpose of use (degree of wear, ornamental or sports use – or “just” landscaping)

- Nursing and maintenance: How big an effort is the customer willing to make?

So the first reason for making mixtures is we want to use the right species and varieties – and in the right proportion – for each individual purpose.

Synergism is another reason for making mixtures. It is a fact that well composed mixtures with many ingredients will stand pests, diseases, invasion from weeds etc. better than a straight sown variety or a “narrow” mixture.

EURO GRASS has got the experience in turf grasses and our breeders have bred excellent varieties so we today can make top quality mixtures for all purposes.



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INFO

New faces show EURO GRASS' expansion

Operational director of EURO GRASS B.V. (NL)
Since 28th April 2008 Helmig Spijkerboer is the new operational director of EURO GRASS B.V. in the Netherlands. Together with Dr. Axel Kaske, managing director of EURO GRASS B.V. and successor of the retired Frans Plevier, he will run the management of the daily business at Ven-Zelderheide. In addition he will be responsible for inventing and coordinating projects for the entire EURO GRASS group. Dr. Axel Kaske will continue his work mainly from the office in Lippstadt due to his responsibilities in international marketing of grass seeds.



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Product manager turf grass for Hunsballe (DK)
Winnie Olsen works as new product manager for turf grasses in charge of sales and marketing of turf grasses for Hunsballe in Denmark, starting 1st June 2008. Winnie has previously worked for Brenntag Nordic with fertilisers for horticultural crops in the Nordic countries. Before that she worked as a plant consultant for the Danish Grower Association primarily with plant protection products for horticultural crops. Winnie has a master degree in horticulture from the Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University in Copenhagen.



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