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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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LEGUME AND GRASS SEED OUTLOOK FOR 1955-56

The supply of 27 legume and grass seeds, including 1955 production plus carry-over on June 30, 1955 plus imports for 4 months, July 1 - October 31, for planting during the 1955-56 season totals 1,249 million pounds. This is shown in the accompanying table giving production, carry-over, imports, supply, and domestic disappearance of these seeds for which estimates are made by the Crop Reporting Board. The current supply is 16 percent larger than last year, but is 11 percent below the 1949-53 average, which, as in the case of last year, includes imports for 12 months July 1 - June 30. The 1955 production accounts for nearly four-fifths of the 1955-56 supply and the carry-over a little less than one-fifth. Imports have added on the average only about 5 percent to the domestic supply of the 27 legume and grass seeds. During the period July 1 - October 31 imports were about a fifth below average. The larger production this year than last more than offsets the 14 percent smaller carry-over this year.

Supplies of groups of seeds compared with last year and average

Currently the supply of alfalfa, clovers, and lespedeza seed, estimated at 662.2 million pounds and constituting more than half the total legume and grass-seed supply, is nearly a third larger than last year and about 12 percent larger than the 5-year average. The supply of the 12 grass seeds, estimated at 268.2 million pounds, is about 9 percent larger than last year and 14 percent above average. But the supply (318.9 million pounds) of the winter cover crop seeds-Austrian Winter peas, lupine, crimson clover, vetches, and ryegrasses-is slightly less than last year and 44 percent below average.

Domestic disappearance of 1954-55 compared with other years

During the 1954-55 season an estimated 791.3 million pounds of the 27 legume and grass seeds were sown on about 49 million acres in the United States. This domestic disappearance or consumption compares with 845.3 million pounds last year and the 5-year average of 902.8 million pounds. Decreases in the disappearance of 13 seeds, notably red clover and lupine, during the 1954-55 season more than offset increases over last year in 13 other seeds.

Surplus supply if 1955-56 domestic disappearance equals 1954-55

If domestic disappearance during the 1955-56 season equalled that of the preceding season there would be a surplus of approximately 457.9 million pounds plus the quantity that would be imported November 1, 1955 - June 30, 1956. Such a gross surplus, however, would not allow for any carry-over at the end of the 1955-56 planting season. If this carry-over equalled that of June 30, 1955, the net surplus would be only 220.8 million pounds plus the imports received November 1, 1955 - June 30, 1956. In this case there would

be a net surplus (i.e. excess of current supply over 1954-55 domestic disappearance plus June 30, 1955 carry-over) of the following seeds in millions of pounds plus imports November 1, 1955-June 30, 1956: Lespedeza (101), alfalfa (59), Sudangrass (35), common ryegrass (33), red clover (22), Austrian Winter peas (11), timothy (8), perennial ryegrass (5), lupine (3), Kentucky bluegrass (1), and redtop (1). On the other hand, there would be net deficits of hairy vetch (14), crimson clover (11), smooth brome (10), red fescue (6), sweetclover (5), purple vetch (4), Ladino clover (3), orchardgrass (2), alsike clover (2), tall fescue (1), and crested wheatgrass (1).

Deficit supply if 1955-56 domestic disappearance and carry-over are average

The 1955 carry-overs of a number of seeds, particularly the fescues, smooth brome, hairy vetch, common ryegrass, alfalfa, crested wheatgrass, and bentgrass were much above average, whereas others, especially Austrian Winter peas, lupine, redtop, common vetch, lespedeza, red clover, timothy, and sweetclover were much below average. If an average carry-over next June were assumed instead of a carry-over equal to that of June 30, 1955, the current supply of the 27 legume and grass seeds would fall short of meeting average domestic requirements by about 24 million pounds. Under these conditions there would not be enough of any of the winter cover crop seeds except the ryegrasses and purple vetch, nor would there be enough red clover, sweetclover, smooth brome, redtop, orchardgrass, white clover, crested wheatgrass, or Kentucky bluegrass. But there would be a surplus of alfalfa, ryegrasses, Sudangrass, fescues, timothy, Ladino clover, bentgrass, purple vetch, and alsike clover.

Most seed prices lower than last year

Prices received by growers for 18 of the 26 legume and grass seeds shown in one of the accompanying price tables are lower than in the fall of 1954. Prices of 23 are below the 5-year average. In mid-October the most marked declines from last year occurred in timothy, tall fescue, Sudangrass, perennial ryegrass, orchardgrass, alfalfa, common ryegrass, redtop, and red clover. Prices of these seeds were a third to a half lower than last year. Growers' prices of only 8 seeds--purple vetch, smooth brome, crimson clover, Austrian Winter peas, common vetch, crested wheatgrass, Ladino clover, and hairy vetch--were higher in mid-October of this year than last year.

Current supply of each seed compared with domestic disappearance

Alfalfa: The total supply of alfalfa seed (1955 production plus carry-over on June 30, 1955 plus imports July 1 - October 31, 1955) for planting during the 1955-56 season is estimated at 270.4 million pounds, as shown in the accompanying table giving supply and disappearance of 27 legume and grass seeds. It is the largest supply of this seed on record, about a fifth larger than last year and three-fifths larger than the 1949-53 average. The current supply is 116.2 million pounds more than the domestic disappearance or consumption last year and 147.6 million pounds more than the 1949-53 average domestic disappearance. So there is more than enough alfalfa seed, particularly of certain improved varieties, than will be needed next year.

Although exports July 1 - September 30 were nearly twice as large as last year for the same period, exports during the remainder of the present fiscal year (ending June 30, 1956) are expected to be much smaller than last year, when supplies of legume and grass seeds in Europe were very short, whereas this year they seem ample for most seeds.

Based on prices growers have been receiving for alfalfa seed this fall, farmers may well expect to pay about a third less for this seed next spring than they paid last spring.

Red clover: The current supply of red-clover seed, estimated at 103.8 million pounds, is 15 percent larger than last year but 23 percent below the 5-year average. With a supply last year a third below average and exports to Europe the largest on record, prices last spring set a record. Chiefly because of the record high price of red clover and the low price of alfalfa seed compared with red clover, domestic disappearance of red clover seed during the 1954-55 season was the smallest during the 16 years of record.

Exports of this seed since July 1 have exceeded imports, but are expected to be much smaller than last year during the remainder of the fiscal year, whereas imports are expected to be much larger than those of last year, when they were the smallest in 8 years.

Currently red-clover seed prices are slightly below average. If domestic consumption during the coming season is average, carry-over will be the smallest in 9 years.

Alsiike clover: Although the current supply of alsike clover, including imports, through October 31, is 12 percent less than last year and 8 percent less than average, imports during the rest of the fiscal year could easily offset the apparent deficit. Canada, normal source for practically all our imports of this seed, has a crop this year 50 percent above the 1949-53 average and a carry-over 32 percent above average. These factors, together with a smaller demand in Europe, would tend to stimulate exports to the United States. But the President's Proclamation to increase the tariff on alsike-clover seed from 2¢ to 6¢ a pound on imports when they exceed 2,500,000 pounds during each 12 month period beginning July 1 during the years 1955 and 1956 will affect imports during the rest of the fiscal year as the 2,500,000-pound mark was exceeded as early as October 31.

Currently prices of alsike-clover seed are about a fourth below average. With an average domestic disappearance during the coming season, the carry-over next June would be about average.

Sweetclover: Currently the supply of sweetclover seed which includes imports for only 4 months is 8 percent smaller than last year's supply which included imports for 12 months. Imports have been running much larger than last year, but if they merely equal last year's imports for the remainder of the fiscal year, the total supply of this seed for the 1955-56 season will exceed that of last year by about 7 percent.

The 1955 production plus carry-over in Canada, source of our imports, totals approximately 16.1 million pounds, which is 7 percent smaller than last year.

Carry-over next June in the United States is expected to be slightly larger than this year if domestic disappearance and imports are equal to those of last year.

Sweetclover-seed prices in mid-October were about 14 percent lower than last year and 13 percent below average.

White clover: The supply of white clover seed is slightly larger than last year, but is below average. Imports have been running much smaller than last year and than average. Largely because of the very high price of this seed last spring and the below-average supply, domestic consumption for the 1954-55 season was a third below average. A somewhat larger consumption than last year at prices about a fifth lower is expected.

Ladino clover: Although the current supply of Ladino-clover seed is nearly a fifth smaller than last year, it is more than twice as large as the domestic disappearance during the 1954-55 season. Growers' prices in mid-October were about 15 percent higher than last year but about 40 percent below average.

Lespedeza: Current supply of lespedeza seed, estimated at 188.1 million pounds, is $2\frac{1}{3}$ times as large as the quantity sown last year and about a fourth more than the average consumption. The sharp decline in prices is expected to stimulate the sowing of much more seed next spring than was sown last spring. But because of the much lower prices received by growers this fall there will be less incentive to harvest a seed crop next fall.

Timothy: Supply of timothy seed is 14 percent larger than last year, but is slightly less than average. Imports and exports have been running much smaller than usual. Canada has a large crop--nearly twice the 5-year average. Imports from there are not needed as the United States supply currently is more than a third larger than the domestic disappearance either last season or the average.

Orchardgrass: Currently the supply of orchardgrass seed is about a sixth smaller than last year, but imports, which have been running much ahead of last year and the average, during the remainder of the current fiscal year are expected to raise the total supply above that of last year. Denmark has a large crop of this seed and is expected to export much of it to the United States. Without imports from there, the United States would not have enough orchardgrass to meet average requirements.

Redtop: The current supply of redtop seed is 15 percent larger than last year, but only 43 percent of an average supply. Because of the sharp decline in consumption during the last 2 years, the current supply, although small, appears to be sufficient for prospective 1955-56 requirements.

Kentucky bluegrass: Supply of Kentucky-bluegrass seed is slightly larger than last year, but is 8 percent below average. It is half again as large as the domestic disappearance last year and a fourth more than the average domestic disappearance.

Fescues: The supply each of Chewings, red, and tall fescue seed is smaller than last year, but much above average. Imports of red fescue through October were about a fourth larger than last year for the same period and more than three times the average. It will be necessary to import about 800,000 pounds more of red fescue to have the supply balance domestic disappearance last season. Supply in Canada, chief source for our imports of this seed, is about a fifth smaller than last year, but more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ times the 5-year average. Currently supplies of Chewings and tall fescue are respectively half again to nearly twice last season's domestic disappearance.

Bentgrass: The supply of bentgrass seed is slightly larger than last year and 66 percent larger than average. It is more than ample to meet expected requirements during the 1955-56 season.

Smooth brome: It will be necessary to import 150,000 pounds more of smooth-brome seed from Canada merely to equal last year's below-average domestic disappearance. Through October, imports were average despite the fact that the supply of this seed in Canada is nearly a fourth below average.

Crested wheatgrass: Supply of crested-wheatgrass seed is a fourth smaller than last year and about 40 percent below average. Imports from Canada, only source of our imports, can make up some of the deficit as the 1955 crop there is nearly 2 1/2 times the average.

Sudangrass: Because of the largest Sudangrass-seed crop in 14 years, together with an average carry-over, the current supply is 71 percent larger than last year and 67 percent above average. Although the low price of this seed is expected to stimulate demand during the 1955-56 season, a large carry-over is indicated for next June unless the demand is much above average.

Winter cover crops: Demand for winter cover crop seeds is over until the fall of 1956. Although this fall's supply of each of these seeds, except common and perennial ryegrass, was below average, supplies of Austrian Winter peas, lupine, common vetch, and common and perennial ryegrass were larger than a year ago. Compared with the 1954-55 domestic disappearance, supplies this fall were larger for six of the eight winter cover crop seeds, the two exceptions being crimson clover and purple vetch.