

Alberta Crop Report

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Alberta 2009 Greenfeed and Silage Production Survey Results

Purpose of Survey

Greenfeed and silage production statistics for Alberta are not available from Statistics Canada or any other source, although producers in the province harvest significant acreage of annual crops for greenfeed and silage every year. To fill this data gap and to meet client needs, the Statistics and Data Development Branch of Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) initiated a greenfeed and silage production survey in 2002. Since then, the survey has been conducted annually, to develop selected statistics for the forage industry.

As in previous years, the 2009 survey was conducted in partnership with Agricultural Fieldmen and Agriculture Financial Services Corporation. The survey collected data on greenfeed and silage acreages, yields and production at the municipality level. The information was then used, along with input from ARD specialists, to develop provincial estimates. It should also be mentioned that the yield and production estimates in this report are on a wet weight basis.

Alberta 2009 Greenfeed and Silage Production

Unfavorable weather conditions, particularly the cool, dry spring, negatively impacted crop production in Alberta in 2009. Based on the recently released Statistics Canada report entitled "November Estimate of Production of Principal Field Crops, Canada, 2009", total production of tame hay in the province was 5.35 million tonnes, or 43 per cent lower than in 2008. To help compensate for the lower tame hay production, some annual crops, including those with poor yields, were harvested for greenfeed and silage production.

In 2009, Alberta producers seeded an estimated total of 17.63 million acres to spring wheat, durum, barley, oats, mixed grains, triticale, canola and dry peas (see Table 1). Of the total seeded area, 86 per cent was harvested as grains and oilseeds, 12 per cent as greenfeed and silage, and two per cent was either grazed or abandoned. The percentage of crop area harvested for grains and oilseeds was much lower than in 2008, as significant acreage of crops with poor yields was salvaged for greenfeed and forage production. Spring cereals, canola and dry peas were among crops being salvaged as forages.

Total area harvested for greenfeed and silage in 2009 was estimated at 2.18 million acres, up 183 per cent from 2008. Total area harvested for greenfeed jumped 269 per cent from 2008, to 1.24 million acres, while silage acreage increased 117 per cent to 945,000 acres.

Due to unfavorable crop growing conditions, greenfeed and silage yields in 2009 were significantly lower than in 2008. The estimated provincial average yield for greenfeed was 2.28 tonnes per acre for barley (2.77 tonnes per acre in 2008), and 1.96 tonnes per acre for oats (2.49 tonnes per acre in 2008). For silage, the provincial average yield was estimated at 4.38 tonnes per acre for barley, and 3.76 tonnes per acre for oats, both markedly below their 2008 levels (6.11 tonnes per acre for barley, and 5.53 tonnes per acre for oats).

Despite the lower yields, greenfeed and silage production was higher than in 2008, the result of larger harvested area. Total greenfeed production was estimated at 2.15 million tonnes, or 146 per cent higher than in 2008, while total silage production increased 34 per cent, to 3.46 million tonnes. The higher greenfeed and silage production helped compensate for the lower tame hay production in 2009.

In 2009, barley and oats were the major crops harvested for greenfeed and silage production, although significant acreage of spring wheat and other crops were also salvaged as forages. For greenfeed production, barley accounted for 39 per cent of the provincial total, while oats represented 32 per cent. Spring wheat and mixed grains accounted for ten per cent and nine per cent, respectively. In terms of silage production, 58 per cent of the provincial total came from barley, and 14 per cent from oats. Spring wheat and mixed grains represented seven per cent each, while other crops (canola and dry peas) accounted for 14 per cent.

Estimates of greenfeed and silage production in Alberta for previous years, dating back to 2002, are also shown in Table 1.

For further information on the survey results, please contact:

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Table 1: Alberta Greenfeed and Silage Production

	Total Seeded Area	Harvested Greenfeed Area	Harvested Silage Area	Average Greenfeed Yield	Average Silage Yield	Total Greenfeed Production	Total Silage Production
	('000 acres)			(tonnes/acre)		('000 tonnes)	
2009							
Spring Wheat	5,875	205	75	1.05	3.06	216	229
Durum	930	20	-	0.91	-	18	-
Barley	3,960	370	455	2.28	4.38	843	1,994
Oats	835	350	130	1.96	3.76	686	488
Mixed Grains	185	100	50	1.93	4.55	193	227
Triticale	40	15	10	1.69	4.54	25	45
Other Crops*	5,800	175	225	0.97	2.12	169	476
Total	17,625	1,235	945	1.74	3.66	2,150	3,460
2008							
Spring Wheat	5,700	-	8	-	4.31	-	34
Durum	930	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barley	4,150	115	255	2.77	6.11	318	1,557
Oats	850	170	120	2.49	5.53	424	664
Mixed Grains	130	42	40	2.63	6.49	110	259
Triticale	35	8	10	2.80	6.67	22	67
Other Crops*	5,910	-	2	-	-	-	-
Total	17,705	335	435	2.61	5.93	875	2,582
2007							
Spring Wheat	4,867	2	8	-	5.67	-	45
Durum	765	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barley	4,850	180	340	2.49	5.72	449	1,943
Oats	1,050	190	125	2.45	5.40	465	675
Mixed Grains	140	50	55	2.54	5.67	127	312
Triticale	40	8	11	2.72	7.17	22	79
Other Crops*	5,645	-	11	-	4.09	-	45
Total	17,357	430	550	2.47	5.64	1,063	3,099
2006							
Spring Wheat	5,769	15	35	1.81	3.63	27	127
Durum	571	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barley	4,095	185	465	2.72	6.12	503	2,847
Oats	1,269	275	150	2.49	5.44	686	816
Mixed Grains	373	100	85	2.77	6.03	277	513
Triticale	76	20	30	3.04	6.80	61	204
Other Crops*	5,087	5	35	2.20	4.34	11	152
Total	17,240	600	800	2.61	5.82	1,565	4,660

* Other crops include canola and dry peas - Not available Totals may not add up due to rounding

Note: Yields and production are reported on a wet weight basis.

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development

Table 1 (Cont'd): Alberta Greenfeed and Silage Production

	Total Seeded Area	Harvested Greenfeed Area	Harvested Silage Area	Average Greenfeed Yield	Average Silage Yield	Total Greenfeed Production	Total Silage Production
	('000 acres)			(tonnes/acre)		('000 tonnes)	
2005							
Spring Wheat	5,587	25	40	2.50	4.90	63	196
Durum Wheat	860	5	-	1.80	-	9	-
Barley	4,225	185	455	3.00	7.00	555	3,185
Oats	1,250	290	235	3.15	7.15	914	1,680
Mixed Grains	220	110	75	3.15	7.15	347	536
Triticale	65	20	20	3.05	7.30	61	146
Other Crops*	4,855	5	35	2.40	4.46	12	156
Total	17,062	640	860	3.06	6.86	1,960	5,900
2004							
Spring Wheat	5,285	25	10	2.50	2.60	63	26
Durum Wheat	875	-	-	-	-	-	-
Barley	4,720	245	340	3.30	7.20	809	2,448
Oats	1,450	285	220	3.35	6.90	955	1,518
Mixed Grains	210	55	105	3.40	7.10	187	746
Triticale	100	17	28	3.80	7.90	65	221
Other Crops*	4,615	8	12	2.88	3.42	23	41
Total	17,255	635	715	3.31	6.99	2,100	5,000
2003							
Spring Wheat	5,158	90	20	1.27	3.63	114	73
Durum Wheat	1,025	5	-	0.91	-	5	-
Barley	5,300	380	500	2.18	4.99	827	2,495
Oats	1,600	470	270	2.00	4.63	938	1,249
Mixed Grains	250	80	130	2.04	4.54	163	590
Other Crops*	3,950	10	50	1.00	2.40	10	120
Total	17,283	1,035	970	1.99	4.67	2,058	4,526
2002							
Spring Wheat	5,159	500	520	0.64	1.27	318	660
Durum Wheat	1,100	30	40	0.36	0.82	11	33
Barley	5,360	750	1,000	0.83	2.09	626	2,087
Oats	1,650	450	310	0.82	1.54	367	478
Mixed Grains	250	70	80	0.82	2.00	57	160
Other Crops*	3,600	200	550	0.61	1.06	121	583
Total	17,119	2,000	2,500	0.75	1.60	1,500	4,000

* Other crops include canola and dry peas - Not available Totals may not add up due to rounding

Note: Yields and production are reported on a wet weight basis.

Source: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development