Performance of Small Grain Varieties for Forage in Alabama, 2008-09

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Richard Guthrie, Acting Director
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Black Belt Research and Extension Center, Marion Junction ...........................J.L. Holliman, Supt.

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E.V. Smith Research Center, Plant Breeding Unit, Tallassee ......................S.P. Nightengale, Supt.

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Gulf Coast Research and Extension Center, Fairhope..................................N.R. McDaniel, Supt.
M.D. Pegues, Assoc. Supt.

Wiregrass Research and Extension Center, Headland...............................L.W. Wells, Supt.
B.E. Gamble, Asst. Supt.
THE 2009 ALABAMA PERFORMANCE COMPARISON OF SMALL GRAIN VARIETIES FOR FORAGE

K.M. Glass and E. van Santen

Agric. Program Associate and Professor, Dept. of Agronomy and Soils, Auburn University, AL 36849

INTRODUCTION

The large number of commercially available varieties of wheat, OAT, rye, barley, and triticale makes it difficult for growers to select varieties most suited for forage production in their particular area of the State because yields and distribution of growth vary. For example, many of the small grain species and varieties differ in their capability to produce early fall and winter forage for livestock production. Making the proper selection requires up-to-date, unbiased, reliable information on total forage yields and seasonal yields of varieties.

Entries in each experiment are determined by the companies or institutes which control each variety, or line, not by Experiment Station personnel. Data from tests conducted at eight locations were used to compile this report. These locations represent the varied growing conditions around the State for the past 3 years.

PROCEDURE

The experimental design for the tests was a split plot with species as the main plot and varieties as subplots. Plots were 5 feet by 20 feet with rows spaced 7 inches apart. A cone drill was used to plant all tests. Each variety was replicated three times in each test entered.

The tests are normally planted in late September to early October. The tests were fertilized at planting with 100 pounds N per acre and clipped with a flail-type mower each time they reached 6 inches in height. The entire harvested forage from each plot was weighed. A sub-sample was also weighed green from each plot, then dried and reweighed. The percent dry matter figure from these weights was then used to calculate forage dry matter per acre. The tests were top-dressed in February with 60 pounds N per acre and clipping was continued until no regrowth occurred in the spring.

DATA EXPLANATION

Total and seasonal dry matter yields are recorded by locations. The four seasonal periods are: autumn-forage produced through December; winter-January and February production; early spring-March and early April production; and late spring-production after April 20.

DISCUSSION

Growing conditions and variety forage performance often vary among locations and years. Multiple-year averages are provided and should be a better indicator for performance comparisons. Cold weather and wet conditions in the fall combined to reduce fall and winter growth.
### Table 1. Seasonal Dry Matter Yield of Wheat, Oat, Rye, and Triticale Varieties Cut as Forage at Tennessee Valley Research and Extension Center, Belle Mina, Alabama, 2009

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<th>Brand-Variety</th>
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<th>Early Spring</th>
<th>Late Spring</th>
<th>Total</th>
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### Table 2. Two-Year Average Seasonal Dry Matter Yield of Wheat, Oat, Rye, and Triticale Varieties Cut as Forage at Tennessee Valley Research and Extension Center, Belle Mina, Alabama, 2008-2009

<table>
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<th>Total</th>
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### Table 20. Two-Year Average Seasonal Dry Matter Yield of Wheat, Oat, Rye, and Triticale Varieties Cut as Forage at the Wiregrass Research and Extension Center, Headland, 2008-2009.

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* Experimental line; not yet commercially available.