

# State of Seed Supply REPORT

**Editor's note:** We asked principals from seed companies across the country to answer two questions: What is the state of the supply of your grass seed crop used for sports fields heading into the overseeding and heavy-use football seasons? And, what is the state of supply for sports turf looking like for Spring 2014 growing season? Here are the responses we received:

**AARON KUENZI,**  
VP-Marketing Manager  
Mountain View Seeds

As we analyze the "State of the Seed Supply" for 2013 and spring 2014 we can be assured of one thing, change. One change will be pricing due to limited supplies.

Supplies of most species of cool-season grass will be tight due to less inventory, lower seed production acres and solid demand. Our seed inventory carryover from the previous year is near a record low. Seed production acres are low as well. Our growers are making economic and agronomic choices to grow other crops. Economically these other crops produce either a higher net return or a quicker return. Growers are also choosing to rotate between crops such as clover, wheat and grass for the agronomic benefits. Looking forward we don't see a lot of change from the production side.

For 2013 we again should see tight supplies and firm prices, as the general consensus is we do not have enough production of seed. As of today the seed harvest is less than average and our crop will be short. We expect to see firm pricing for fall of 2013 and into spring of 2014. In our opinion perennial ryegrass, fine fescues and Kentucky bluegrass will be affected the most. So this year be prepared to order early especially if you need a specific variety and/or quality of seed.

**JOHN RECTOR,**  
turf products manager  
Barenbrug USA

New Crop 2013 seed supplies are looking good for sports turf grasses from Barenbrug USA. Though competition for seed production acres remains strong, we anticipate a good supply of seed for our distribution partners that service the sports turf industry.

RPR, Regenerating Perennial Ryegrass, named a 2011 Innovative Product by the STMA, has shown increased use each year since its first release. Now christened with a new botanical name, *Lolium perenne subsp. stoloniferum*, RPR's reputation for durability and traffic recovery has grown significantly in the sports turf industry. Now representing three varieties, RPR continues to perform well in the traditional ryegrass climates and in unlikely areas such as the turf transition zone. Developed from 'Virginia' traffic survivors, RPR's durability in difficult summer conditions is both remarkable and unusual for perennial ryegrass. Supply for RPR looks very good.

The newest member of our 'Sports Turf' family is our Turf Blue HGT Kentucky bluegrass blend. To date, the performance of this blend of bluegrasses has been nothing short of amazing. On one particular Maryland Soccer complex, newly seeded Turf Blue HGT was successfully played on 35 days after seeding and the field is still playing like a champ this summer. '35 days and play' is unheard of for any species, let alone a bluegrass. Its key component, Barvette HGT, performed exceptionally well in the recently completed NTEP KB trial (2005 thru 2010). In the brutal transition zone, Barvette HGT finished in the top statistical grouping or #1 for 16 different evaluated turfgrass traits. At this time new crop supply looks very good and we're optimistic for excellent quality.

Barenbrug also provides the world's only true rhizomatous tall fescues, Turf Saver RTF. With establishment, RTF develops a strong system of true rhizomes and a deep, extensive root system. Turf Saver RTF supplies also look very good.

Bermudagrass supplies also look good with prices leveling off. Our Barbados Brand, featuring SWI-1044, is an outstanding product for those fields needing an elite feel to

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Yukon bermudagrass has excellent high quality seed. -Leah A. Brilman, PhD, director of research and technical services, Seed Research of Oregon



them. Also with excellent NTEP performance, 2002-2006, SWI-1044 exhibits many top performing traits for sports turf uses.

Another Barenbrug exclusive is our proprietary coating technology called Yellow Jacket. Yellow Jacket provides strong absorbant technology combined with Dormancy Breaker and Apron XL to provide the best in seedling development and protection. Yellow Jacket technology is available on most Barenbrug products and most custom mixes.

**DUANE KLUNDT,**  
**VP of sales Grassland Oregon**

Most cool season turf grasses are in a balanced, to less than favorable state. This coupled with the Pacific Northwest weird weather patterns this past year (super dry fall, very wet early winter, very dry late winter, hotter than normal spring, and cool early summer, and now dry) may cause some quality issues. The result maybe some heartburn for those looking for high quality seed at a good price, it may just not be

there. Perennial Ryegrass is in very tight supply and coupled with a record high grower price for the fall of 2013 and the pressure for good quality, we would recommend buying your seed as early as you can to ensure the best price and best quality you can. Kentucky bluegrass is also in a similar situation, with production being about as low as it has been in decades, and the elite Kentucky bluegrass varieties being in short supplies due to the residual scars of the past downturn in economy, again I would buy your needs early. Turf Type Tall Fescue is still in a fairly tight situation but it should be way more balanced thus maintaining a stable price throughout the year, but quality may still be an issue with some varieties being extremely short. Seed inventories are about as short as they have been in quite some time so this is not a year to procrastinate.

Quality will be a problem come spring, if the seed crop continues to come in as it is supplies could be very tight in early 2014. As

stated in the fall section I would buy or book my seed as early as possible with your distributor, that way they can arrange to get the supplies the sports turf managers need. We need to remember cool season turf grass is harvested in July/August and it will not happen again until next year. It cannot simply be manufactured, so it will require the turf manager to make sure some planning is done. Do your homework now for next spring to assure you get what you need, both in quality and in the quantity.

**JOHN T. LAMLE,**  
**VP of research and production**  
**Johnston Seed Company**

Johnston Seed Company is the exclusive producer and marketer of Riviera Bermuda-grass seed. We had an excellent supply of seed for the sportsturf market in 2013 and will have an excellent supply to meet those needs in 2014. We do not produce any cool-season grasses for the overseeding market, so I can not contribute to that request. ■



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