

Selecting a Good Grass Variety

Dan Undersander

- 1) Select high yielding varieties to get up to 4 t/a additional yield per year
 - a. Check UWEX publication A1525 Forage Variety Update for Wisconsin.
 - b. Check website for more detail (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/forage/>).
- 2) Avoid smooth brome grass - high yield but 60 to 70% of yield in first cutting with little rest of season.
- 3) Avoid timothy - short lived (2 to 4 years) and lowest yielding grass.
- 4) Choose orchardgrass or tall fescue
 - a. Select tested varieties to ensure adequate winterhardiness
 - b. Look for later maturity (cheap seed is early varieties that head before alfalfa is ready to cut). Some varieties head two weeks later than others.
 - c. Look for a variety with more consistent yield throughout season (with a high β from forage website (<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/forage/>))
 - d. Select orchardgrass and tall fescue varieties with rust resistance – rust will reduce yield and reduce animal intake. Rust is orange particles that coat shoes in July and August when walking through fields.



Winterhardy vs winterkilled orchardgrass varieties



Rust resistant (right) vs susceptible (left and top)