Forage Factsheet – Kentucky Bluegrass

Species Name: Kentucky Bluegrass – *Poa pratensis*

Origin: Europe, North America.

Longevity: Long-lived.

Uses: Grazing, turf, reclamation.

Optimal time of use: Kentucky bluegrass is best suited for early season grazing.

Recovery after use: Regrowth is rapid under good moisture conditions. Graze livestock on Kentucky bluegrass to maintain a stand height of 2-6 inches (50 -152 mm). Maintaining Kentucky bluegrass in the vegetative stage will enhance yield and quality.

Yield: Irrigated yields of Kentucky bluegrass are 7420 lb/ac (8431 kg/ha).

Palatability/Nutritional Value: Kentucky bluegrass has an average total digestible nutrient (TDN) level of 67% and crude protein level of 12% in the vegetative state. Quality and palatability declines when Kentucky bluegrass matures.

Competitiveness: Kentucky bluegrass is grazing tolerant and can increase in pasture mixes and invade native prairie.

Winter Hardiness: Kentucky bluegrass has excellent winter hardiness.

Drought Tolerance: Kentucky bluegrass has fair drought tolerance and avoids drought by going dormant during dry periods.

Erosion Control: Kentucky bluegrass may be used to control erosion because it forms a dense root system.

Ease of Establishment: Kentucky bluegrass is slow to establish.

Suggested Mixtures: Legumes in irrigated pasture.

Salinity Tolerance: Kentucky bluegrass is not tolerant of saline soils.

Flooding Tolerance: Kentucky bluegrass may withstand flooding for one to two weeks in the spring.

Soil Texture: Kentucky bluegrass is suited to well drained, fertile soils in moist or humid regions.

Acidity Tolerance: Kentucky bluegrass tolerates soil pH as low as 5.8.

Management Considerations: Kentucky bluegrass production is very moisture dependant. Kentucky bluegrass has a high demand for nitrogen and phosphorous.

Source: Saskatchewan Forage Council, 2007.
Dryland Forage Species Adaptation CD.