

Forage Factsheet – Slender Wheatgrass

Species Name: Slender Wheatgrass – *Agropyron trachycaulum*

Origin: Native to mixed grass prairie.

Longevity: 3-4 years.

Uses: Hay, pasture, reclamation mixes.

Optimal time of use: Hay slender wheatgrass soon after head emergence for the best forage quality and yield.

Recovery after use: Use slender wheatgrass once per year for grazing or haying. Leave 4 inches (10 cm) after grazing or haying to maintain stand longevity.

Yield: Slender wheatgrass yields approximately 3290 lbs/acre (3738 kg/ha) in the Brown soil zone, 4140 lbs/acre (4704 kg/ha) in the Dark Brown soil zone, and 4550 lbs/acre (5170 kg/ha) in the Black and Grey soil zones.

Palatability/Nutritional Value: Slender wheatgrass has adequate nutritional value for fall grazing until November, but has low palatability. Slender wheatgrass has an average digestibility of 55% and crude protein levels ranging from 11% prior to heading to 9.5% at maturity.

Competitiveness: Slender wheatgrass is short lived and often decreases in abundance over time.

Winter Hardiness: Slender wheatgrass has good winter hardiness.

Drought Tolerance: Slender wheatgrass has fair drought tolerance.

Erosion Control: Slender wheatgrass is effective at erosion control due to its rapid establishment. It should be used with a longer lived creeping grass to maintain site protection in the long-term.

Ease of Establishment: Slender wheatgrass establishes easily.

Suggested Mixtures: Slender wheatgrass is most often used as a component of a mix for saline soil reclamation purposes.

Salinity Tolerance: Slender wheatgrass has good salinity tolerance.

Flooding Tolerance: Slender wheatgrass withstands two to five weeks of spring flooding.

Soil Texture: Slender wheatgrass is suited to moist sandy-loam through clay soils. Slender wheatgrass is adapted to areas that receive at least 14 inches (35 cm) of annual precipitation. It is well adapted to moist low-lying areas that are not waterlogged.

Acidity Tolerance: Slender wheatgrass tolerates soil pH as low as 5.6.

Management Considerations: Provide adequate fertility. To prolong the presence of slender wheatgrass within the stand, allow for seed drop and establishment of new plants.