

# Forage Factsheet – Tall Wheatgrass

Species Name: Tall Wheatgrass - *Agropyron elongatum*

Origin: Saline meadows of southern Russia.

Longevity: Long lived.

Uses: Saline area reclamation, hay, pasture.

Optimal time of use: Cut tall wheatgrass just prior to or shortly after heading for the most nutritious and palatable hay. Rotationally graze tall wheatgrass late in the summer.

Recovery after use: Tall wheatgrass produces one hay crop per year. Tall wheatgrass may be grazed more than once per grazing season but should have at least four weeks of rest between defoliations. Leave 6 to 8 inches (15-20 cm) of stubble or regrowth prior to killing frost.

Yield: Tall wheatgrass yields approximately 3255 lbs/acre (3698 kg/ha) in the Brown soil zone, 3320 lbs/acre (3772 kg/ha) in the Dark Brown soil zone, and 3550 lbs/acre (4034 kg/ha) in the Black and Grey soil zones.

Palatability/Nutritional Value: Tall wheatgrass has poor palatability due to the stiff, robust basal leaves and coarse stems. Hay is palatable if cut before or at heading. Tall wheatgrass has an average digestibility of 47% and crude protein of 10.6%.

Competitiveness: Tall wheatgrass competes poorly with weeds until it is well established.

Winter Hardiness: Tall wheatgrass is extremely winter hardy.

Drought Tolerance: Tall wheatgrass has poor drought tolerance.

Erosion Control: Tall wheatgrass has poor erosion control due to its bunch grass growth form.

Ease of Establishment: Tall wheatgrass seedlings are slow to germinate and do not compete well with weeds. Allow tall wheatgrass to grow and set seed for at least two years before utilizing. Seeds germinate over an extended period of time.

Suggested Mixtures: Tall wheatgrass is most frequently used in a mixture with other saline tolerant species for reclamation.

Salinity Tolerance: Tall wheatgrass is the most salinity tolerant tame grass species.

Flooding Tolerance: Tall wheatgrass tolerates up to five weeks of spring flooding.

Soil Texture: Tall wheatgrass is best suited to areas with at least 15 inches (37 cm) of annual precipitation, where the water table is high, in areas with relatively poor drainage, or where the ground remains moist year round. It is adapted to moist loamy to clay soils in all soil zones in Saskatchewan.

Acidity Tolerance: Tall wheatgrass tolerates soil pH as low as 6.6.

Management Considerations: Effective weed control when establishing tall wheatgrass increases establishment success.