



Seed heads on first year NWSG planting.



Mature, end of season Warm Season Grass.



Native Warm Season Grass biomass.

Additional detailed information and support are available for establishment, maintenance, harvesting, and marketing from the below organizations.

Luzerne Conservation District
Jennifer Lauri, Agricultural
Conservation Technician
325 Smiths Pond Road
Shavertown, PA

Phone: 570-674-7991 x 7
E-mail: jennifer@luzcd.org

or

Association of Warm Season Grass
Producers (AWSGP)
Will Brandau, President

Phone: 570-814-0195
E-mail: willbrandau@gmail.com



LUZERNE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

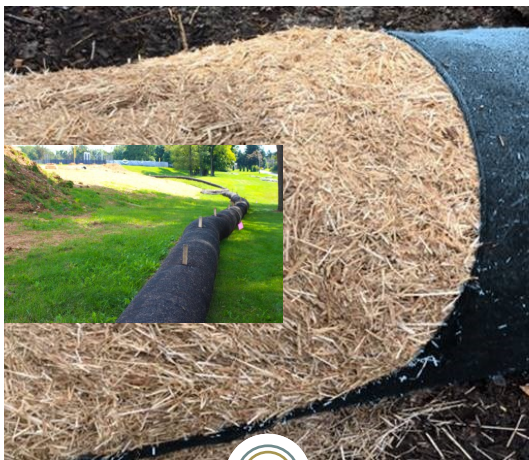


Exploring the Benefits and Market for Warm Season Grasses



LUZERNE
CONSERVATION DISTRICT





Native Warm-Season Grass in Demand in Pennsylvania

Native warm-season grass crops like Switchgrass, Big Blue Stem, Indian grass and Giant Miscanthus are a compelling opportunity for producers interested in expanding acreage to marginal fields for fuller land utilization, exploring new agricultural products and markets, enhancing ecosystem services, and reaching many other objectives. However, adoption of these crops is not yet widespread, and producers interested or active in managing these crops may benefit from working cooperatively to build the industry.

Currently in Pennsylvania there is a high demand for native warm-season grasses.

The silt sock and poultry bedding industries are finding great benefits using native warm-season grasses, and Pennsylvania cannot keep up with the demand for this beneficial grass.

The demand for this grass is no surprise as it is multifunctional and supports sustainable agriculture.

BENEFITS OF WARM SEASON GRASSES

- As a commodity they are bringing significant prices per ton and demand is high in Pennsylvania.
- Excellent tonnage per acre. Ranging from 3-6 tons per acre on properly maintained ground.
- Long term perennial crop that requires minimal lime and fertilizer amendments.
- Able to grow in a wide variety of soil types.
- Once established, warm-season grasses are fairly easy to maintain.
- Improves air quality by removing carbon from the atmosphere.
- Improves soil quality through reduced soil erosion.
- Reduces compaction of soil which creates increased water infiltration subsequently reducing runoff.
- Improves water quality by reducing soil erosion due to a deep root system and by sequestering soil nitrogen and phosphorous
- By supplying and supporting the silt sock industry in its use of native grasses instead of acidic woodchips growers have an additional positive impact on water quality.
- Warm season grasses provide great warm season pastures and green hay crops for livestock
- Warm season grasses offer habitats for wildlife, especially through winter. Additional opportunities to plant pollinators in non production areas.

Establishing Your Warm Season Grasses

Select a site. Control weeds and existing vegetation on that site prior to planting.

Planting can be done in spring (March—May) or fall (November—early December). A higher level of success will be achieved if existing sod is properly treated prior to no-till planning.

Continued above...

Soil amendments should be used for the best success.

Determine your mix. A representative of Association for Warm Season Grass Producers can help with this.

The preferred planting method is to use a no-till drill however, conventional tillage and broadcast seeding can be done.

Have patience, the process can take a few years (2-3) before harvest is available. It is important to continue to control weeds.

ADDITIONAL WARM-SEASON GRASS USES

Absorbent for spills·Kitty litter·Control erosion ground·cover for soil conservation·pressed particle board·hay for cattle·bio-sequestration of atmospheric carbon dioxide· forage·grazing· game cover·abandoned mine land reclamation· cattle pasture·substitute for wheat straw· livestock bedding·phytoremediation projects· poultry house bedding·straw bale houses· substrate for growing mushrooms·ornamental grasses·bioenergy feedstock·biomass crop for cellulosic ethanol·produce butanol fiber·produce electricity·heat production·fuel as bale·fuel as pellet



Switchgrass used as poultry bedding