

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Bermudagrass: Getting the right sprigs

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If you have made the decision to establish bermudagrass pasture or hayfields, you have probably considered both sprigging and seeded bermudagrass options. Research from South Carolina and Virginia (North Carolina research was started last year by Bladen and Jones county agents) suggests seeded varieties are promising. Sprigging and sprigged varieties are tried and true.

If you choose to sprig instead of seed, your source of sprigs needs careful consideration. Sprigging is a big long term investment. The wrong source of sprigs may result in a stand that is of lower productivity with undesirable hay or grazing characteristics. The wrong source of sprigs can introduce persistent weed problems that will be costly or even impossible to fix.

It is not easy to distinguish different bermudagrass varieties from one another until well into the summer season. Many people are not able to tell varieties apart visually- although forage yields, nutrient analysis, and persistence differ significantly for each variety. It is impractical if not impossible to distinguish sprigs of one variety from another.

Demand for sprigs is high with good hay markets and pasture renovation. Local agents have noticed an increase in the sprigging business. Few old bermudagrass fields are “pure bermudas” of any variety. So think carefully about your source of sprigs and sprigging contract.

Certified sprigs are available from farm companies that have been inspected by the North Carolina Crop Improvement Association. Sprig source fields are inspected annually to verify both variety and minimal weed content. Certified spriggers must provide each client with an NCCIA certificate. Four certified sprig sources are listed on the NCCIA website for 2008: www.nccrop.com. You can also phone the head of NCCIA, Darryl Bowman, at 919-515-2851.

Locally, in some areas there may be well-known, very reputable spriggers who are not certified, but who knows bermudagrass and can supply good quality and true variety sprigs. Such suppliers rely on their standing in the community for their success.

Bermudagrass is a long term investment! Please select sprig sources with care for the best results!

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