

Bermudagrass Varieties - Tifton 85, Jiggs, World Feeder

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There are many newer bermudagrass varieties on the market. To evaluate their merits, research must be done to determine their relative yield, stand density, quality and other characteristics. I usually compare new varieties to Coastal (in the southern SPFCIC states) or Tifton 44 (in the more northern states).

Tifton 85 bermudagrass was released in 1992 by the USDA-ARS at Tifton, Georgia. This variety is taller, and has larger stems and leaves than most commercially available bermudagrasses. It has larger rhizomes (although fewer than coastal or Tifton 44). Tifton 85 spreads rapidly by stolons, with spread measured at 18 inches per week during June growth; it spreads more vigorously by rhizomes than other varieties. Tifton 85 is an F1 hybrid between a plant introduction from South Africa (PI 290884) and Tifton 68; it is higher in digestibility than Coastal or Jiggs. In the 1999 Texas State Hay Show, TDN content of 17 samples of Tifton 85 was 64%; TDN content of 70+ samples of Coastal was 61%; and, TDN content of 15 samples of Jiggs was 60 %. Compared to Tifton 78, Tifton 85 produced 47% more live-weight gain per acre (Tifton 78 produced 36% more live-weight gain per acre than Coastal). Tifton 85 is planted by green rhizomes, stolons, or tops; it is not planted by dormant rhizomes. Although it spreads rapidly, it is harder to establish a stand of Tifton 85 than Coastal or Jiggs.

Jiggs bermudagrass is a private-release that traces its origin to a rancher in east Texas by the name of J. C. Riggs. Several accounts have been given as to how this grass was originally distributed, but it has become very popular along the upper Texas Gulf Coast. Jiggs establishes easiest of all varieties, and quicker than Coastal on heavy textured soils. It is adapted to various soil types, and even does well on heavy, wet soils. Jiggs is easy to plant by tops. It does not have many rhizomes, and does not produce as much as Coastal or Tifton 85 in a drought. It also has less cold tolerance than Tifton 85 or Coastal. Quality is more or less equal to that of Coastal. According to test by Edward van Santen at Auburn University, Jiggs is closely related to Callie bermudagrass, and even more closely related to a Mississippi ecotype called Rice Maddox.

World Feeder bermudagrass is a patented private release by Mr. Louis Gordon of Bethany, Oklahoma. World Feeder, in replicated research tests in various states, has produced less than Coastal. It has good quality and palatability. A paper by Dr. Don Ball is included for more information on World Feeder Bermudagrass.

TABLE 1. Relative Yields of Tifton 85, Jiggs And/Or World Feeder Bermudagrasses as Compared to Coastal or Tifton 44.

	<i>Fayetteville, AR 1992</i>	<i>Ona, FL 2-Yr. Ave.</i>	<i>Homer, LA 1998</i>	<i>Chickosha, OK 4-Yr. Ave.</i>	<i>Lane, OK</i>	<i>Noble Foundation, OK 1998 3-Yr. Ave.</i>	<i>Uvalde, TX</i>	<i>Pecos, TX 3-Yr. Ave. (irr.)</i>	<i>Bryan, TX 3-Yr. Ave.</i>	<i>Overton, TX 3-Yr. Ave.</i>
Coastal		100				100	100	100	100	100
Tifton 44	100		100	100	100	73	80			
Tifton 85		112				107	114	167	91	146
Jiggs						84	86	113	95	125
World Feeder	75	102	71	54	67			6	74	96

World Feeder Bermudagrass*

A bermudagrass named "World Feeder" has been commercially available since the early 1990's. The organization which markets it, Agricultural Enterprises Corporation, is located in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. This bermudagrass has been widely advertised in popular farm magazines. It is known to exhibit good winter hardiness and a rapid establishment rate.

World Feeder bermudagrass was not developed in a plant breeding program, but rather was found growing naturally in Oklahoma, apparently the result of a mutation or natural hybridization. This is not a particularly rare occurrence; other bermudagrasses which did not originate from a plant breeding program and which are being propagated in some areas include "Jiggs," "Vaughn's Number 1," "Summeral," "Alicia," and "Russell."

Forage producers who read advertisements pertaining to World Feeder bermudagrass are understandably interested in knowing more about it. World Feeder bermudagrass has been included in university variety trials in several states, so this information sheet was compiled to provide forage yield and quality comparisons with other bermudagrass varieties in these unbiased trials. NOTE: This document does not necessarily include every university test in which World Feeder may have been included, but it does include all that we are aware of at this time.

The forage yield and forage quality data included in this document should be self-explanatory. Thus, anyone who reviews it should be able to reach his or her own conclusions regarding how the varieties which were tested (including, but not limited to, World Feeder) compare with each other with regard to forage yield and forage quality.

*Compiled from various sources by Dr. Don Ball (Extension Agronomist/Alumni Professor, Auburn University) and Dr. Garry Lacefield (Extension Agronomist/Professor, University of Kentucky).

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