

Hybrid Bermudagrass Planting Material Status

Roger Gates, Southeast AgriSeeds, LLC, Rome, GA

Hybrid bermudagrass forage varieties offer the highest potential for production of quality warm-season growth for grazing or harvest where they are adapted. Recent research suggest the region of adaptation is expanding northward. While important variation among varieties has been described, **hybrids are superior to seeded varieties** when managed appropriately.

Access to **vegetative planting material** and **specialized harvesting and planting machinery** are needed for establishment of hybrid bermudagrass. These requirements may be contributing to an **apparent decline in availability of planting material** as well as **limited access to custom planting contractors**. An additional concern is **public agency commitment to inspection** to ensure purity of planting material.

A survey (Fig. 1) was distributed via email during March 2025 to State Forage Extension Specialists in 13 southern states to determine the current status of availability of hybrid bermudagrass planting material.

Figure 1. Survey Distributed to Specialists

In your state -

- Is there a current forage bermudagrass breeding/development effort?
- Is an agency responsible for inspection of hybrid bermudagrass planting material? If so, who?
- Are there custom sprigging contractors currently operating? How many?
- Does your state provide any "directory" of hybrid bermudagrass planting material sources?
- Does your state provide any "directory" of sprigging contractors?
- Estimate the acres of hybrid bermudagrass planting material currently maintained:

	Inspected	Uninspected
Coastal	_____	_____
Tifton 44	_____	_____
Tifton 85	_____	_____
Russel	_____	_____
Coastcross II	_____	_____
Midland	_____	_____
Florakirk	_____	_____
Brazos	_____	_____
Jiggs	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Responses were received from 11 states.

Hybrid forage bermudagrass breeding programs remain in only 2 states (Table 1).

Only 1 state identified an agency responsible for inspection of planting material.

No responses identified acreages of inspected planting material (Table 2).

Contract spriggers were identified for 8 states. Most were very limited.

Only 4 states maintained contact information for bermudagrass planting material and/or contract spriggers.

Substantial acreages of hybrid bermudagrass (uninspected) were identified for 5 states.



Table 1. Hybrid Bermudagrass Development and Maintenance Status

	Bermudagrass breeding?	Inspection agency?	Custom spriggers?	Planting material directory?	Contract sprigger directory?
Alabama	NO	NO	YES - 2	YES	YES
Florida	YES	NO?	YES (FEW)	NO	NO
Georgia	YES (ARS)	NO?	YES	in progress	in progress
Kentucky	NO	NO	0	NO	NO
Louisiana	NO	NO	YES - 8	NO	NO
Mississippi	NO	NO	YES - 3	List of spriggers and cultivars updated annually	
North Carolina	NO	NC Crop Imp Assoc	YES - 1	NO	NO
South Carolina	NO	NO	YES - 2	NO	NO
Tennessee	NO	NO?	NO	NO	NO
Texas	NO	NO	YES	maintained by State Specialist	
Virginia	NO	NO	0	NO	NO



Table 2. Acreage Estimates of Uninspected Hybrid Bermudagrass

	Alabama	Florida	Georgia	Kentucky	Louisiana	Mississippi	North Carolina	South Carolina	Tennessee	Texas	Virginia
Coastal	100,000	?	10 ²	0	33,600		++++	?	0	1-2x10 ⁶	0
Tifton 44	10,000	?	10 ²	0	0	45,000	+++	?	0	0	0
Tifton 85	50,000	?	10 ²	0	4,200	112,000	FEW	?	0	5x10 ⁵	0
Russel	100,000	?	10 ³	0	54,600		-	?	0		0
Coastcross II	1,000	?	?	0	0		-	?	0		0
Midland 99	0	?	0	0	0		+++	?	0	1,000	0
Florakirk	0	?	0	0	0		-	?	0		0
Brazos	0	?	0	0	0		-	?	0		0
Jiggs	10,000	?	10 ²	0	84,000	2,000	-	?	0	5x10 ⁵	0
Alicia	-	-	10 ³	-	63,000	10,000	-	-	-	-	-
Sumrall 007	1,000	-	-	-	40,600	100,000	-	-	-	-	-
BY101	-	-	-	-	-	700	-	-	-	-	-
Ozark	-	-	-	-	-	-	++	-	-	-	-