

BARNYARDS & BACKYARDS

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING



UW Cooperative Extension Service  Profitable & Sustainable Agricultural Systems

Regional pea production guide is ready to go to press!

By James Krall, UW College of Agriculture plant sciences professor and agronomist with the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension Center near Lingle

Both green and yellow grain peas are used for human consumption including canning, soup, and food processing. Peas are also an excellent protein supplement for all livestock.

At the University of Wyoming, peas were incorporated at 16 percent of the diet, in place of corn and soybean meal, for finishing hogs. In comparison to hogs fed a traditional ration of corn and soybean meal, there was no negative effect on finishing performance or carcass characteristics. In University of Nebraska trials, it was determined peas can replace up to 59 percent of the corn in a beef finishing diet with no significant differences in animal gain or feed efficiency.

Across the region, pea and oat forage mixtures have averaged 1.7



and 4.1 tons/acre in dry land and irrigated trials, respectively. Small grain and pea forage mixtures are usually not economically competitive with perennial forage crops (i.e.: alfalfa) due to higher establishment costs; however, there are three situa-

tions where this practice should be used: 1.) when alfalfa or other perennial forages are established using a companion crop (a nurse crop). The mixture may be removed as forage to allow better establishment and more vigorous growth of the alfalfa; 2.) to provide an emergency source of forage when perennial forages are in short supply; 3.) as a short-term dry land pasture fallow replacement crop.

Small grain pea forage mixtures should be harvested based on the maturity stage of the small grain. These mixtures should be harvested at the late boot stage (few heads showing) for lactating dairy cows and the soft dough stage for heifers, dry cows, and beef cattle. Harvesting at late boot will generally result in forage that is about 125 to 130 relative forage quality (RFQ), and harvesting at the soft dough stage will increase tonnage and result in a forage that is about 100 to 110 RFQ, which is adequate for heifers, dry cows and beef cattle. RFQ

is an alternative to relative feed value and quality index. It is a more recently developed index allowing newer concepts and more accurate predictions of the performance of forage-fed animals.

Since peas are an early season broadleaf plant, they can be used to add diversity to cropping systems involving grass such as wheat, barley, corn, or proso millet. The benefits of including peas in these rotations include: 1) providing a break in the life cycles of particular plant pathogens, weeds, or insects; 2) maintaining organic matter and reducing nitrogen fertility costs; 3) providing an improved soil physical condition that aids in more efficient use of soil water or soil nutrients throughout the profile; and 4) potentially providing a positive yield response for subsequent crops in the rotation.

These are only some of the reasons producers may want to consider peas in their operations. To help decide, producers may

want to purchase a multi-state pea production guide scheduled to be available to the public in early 2006. The publication is a joint effort between university extension specialists from Wyoming, Nebraska, and South Dakota. Pea Production in the High Plains is a comprehensive publication providing timely advice on the production of pea grain as well as pea forage.

It addresses topics such as soil fertility, weed control, insect and disease management, crop rotations, and seeding and harvesting. A section explains the use of peas in livestock rations and information on costs of production and marketing. The publication will be available for purchase from the UW College of Agriculture's Resource Center at (307) 766-2115, or e-mail bixbyd@uwyo.edu. It will also be available for purchase on CD or free via Internet download or by calling your local extension educator.

Growers' costs increasing and safety never enough

by Jim Gill
UW CES Big Horn Basin
Area Extension Educator

A priority this time of year is to put forth a good game plan for the local banker. Rising input costs like nitrogen fertilizer will undoubtedly increase the budget needed to farm next year. The University of Wyoming Cooperative Extension Service (CES) is a good resource to help producers and their bankers figure it out. We can assist them develop a reasonable budget reflecting the increased costs of doing business for crop production.

Spreadsheet programs that Jim Jacobs and John Hewlett with the College of Agriculture's Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics have put together will be just the ticket. There are programs for assessing the impact of increasing fuel prices, break-even fertilizer costs, and Wyoming machinery and operations costs calculation software. Go to: <http://agecon.uwyo.edu/farmmgt/software>.

For non-computer jockeys, call the nearest CES office and arrange to meet with the area agriculture extension educator and learn how they work.

Farm safety should also be a big part of time spent this winter preparing for a safe and secure growing season in 2006. Are your hired men and women up to speed on worker protection standards including the safe handling of restricted-use pesticides? Do you have the proper signage posted in shops where pesticides are stored and handled? Electrical lines around irrigation pipe or supplies that need to be moved regularly, leaking fuel lines, overheating radiators, and driving too fast for conditions are just a few examples of hazards employees and your children should be aware of and advised about. We want them around for a long time. Think safety!

This is a good time of year to add roll-over protection to tractors and place guards over moving belts and chains on harvesting equip-

ment, etc. I had someone call me this year who lost his father in a harvesting mishap some years ago. He was reading where a similar incident occurred elsewhere because there still was no backup warning (beeping horn) on a harvester, and it backed over the individual just like one did to his father. These types of tragedies happen all too often in our state, and they can be avoided with proper planning and procedures in place.

An area needing more attention on farms and ranches is electrical safety. Properly installed ground fault receptacles can reduce electrical shock significantly. Many areas in and around the shop, water wells, and corrals can be wet and provide an environment for electrical accidents. I have seen some pretty ugly wiring jobs on local farms and ranches. Paying attention to detail can save a life or reduce serious bodily harm.

We hope you have a fun, prosperous, and safe 2006. One thing about our Wyoming winters is that they can kill those pesky overwintering insects and disease organisms. This helps put us one foot up when it comes to growing that next crop.

Determining actual production history

By James Sedman, Sedman Economics, and John Hewlett, University of Wyoming, Cooperative Extension Service¹

Crop insurance can be an effective tool to help producers manage risk. Yield-based policies, such as multiple peril crop insurance (MPCI), income protection insurance (IP), and revenue products require farmers to keep accurate production records. These records are used to calculate a producer's actual production history (APH). The Risk Management Agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture determines what yield records are acceptable to use for an APH.

What is an APH?

An APH is a series of production yields, separated by crop, type, unit, and practice, for a minimum of the four previous years and may include up to 10 years. When fewer than four years of actual yields are available, a transitional yield (T-yield) is used as needed. The APH yield is derived by calculating a simple average of approved yields.

A yield record must show farm-stored or marketed production verifiable by the insurance company. For example, a farmer who markets grain through a local elevator will be able to determine production yields from grain sold. Forage records would include fed production where appropriate. A new producer, one who has grown the crop two years or less, will be assigned 100 percent of the T-yield. A newly insured producer who does not have or cannot provide adequate records for at least the most recent crop year is assigned 65 percent of the T-yield and is restricted to insuring only basic units. If the yield for the most recent crop year is provided, three additional years may be calculated as a percentage of the T-yield. The producer is responsible for updating yields each year thereafter. Where acceptable records are not provided, 75 percent of the APH yield is assigned for that year.

Accurate production records are important

The importance of keeping accurate production records cannot be overemphasized. Not only can this help keep farmers on top of their finances, but it can also mean a substantial financial difference when applied to crop insurance. Using a T-yield, which is typically lower than an individual's average yield, equates to a lower level of insurance.

Consult a crop insurance representative for more information on determining APH or on crop record-keeping. For more information on this and other risk management topics on the Web, visit the Western Risk Management Library at: agecon.uwyo.edu/riskmgt.

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