

The AMPAC Impact

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Did anyone pick the right NCAA champion? If you did, you are in an elite group. I mean George Mason?! Who would have guessed they would make it to the Final Four? Picking the right basketball team is like predicting the 2006 grass seed harvest. It is a lot of guess work; especially this early in the year. However, we can make a few preharvest predictions.

We can predict that the overall perennial ryegrass yield is going to be off, most of the tall fescue looks great, and there will be plenty of white clover. That is as long as we don't have our very own George Mason.

The big talk of course is perennial ryegrass. Tom Silberstein, an OSU grass seed extension agent, sums it up. "We're still scratching our heads as to what caused it, but there are a lot of second year fields that just didn't come back."

Baring anymore "big" surprises here is how we see the upcoming cool-season grass harvest:

Perennial Ryegrass- Although acreage is high, low inventories and the potential of a 20% crop loss keeps this market firm and moving up.

Annual Ryegrass- A slight increase in acres from last year is offset by very low inventories keeping this market firm.

Tall Fescue- Very tight inventories have pushed this market high. Currently the Oregon crop looks very good and acres are up, but I still look for this market to stay firm through the rest of 2006. Recent rains have been a big relief to the otherwise very dry Kentucky 31 production regions. Most believe the rains are to little to late?

Fine Fescue- Proprietary markets are currently very tight but look for this to change as there has been an

increase in acres for the 2006 harvest. Exchange rates and a strong demand have helped strengthen the common creper market.

Kentucky Bluegrass- Large inventories and another "good" crop just around the corner have kept this market soft. I don't expect a big change in the price.

Orchardgrass- Fewer acres and low inventories domestically and in Europe will keep this market firm even through new crop.

As an industry we have seen great spring movement. With a few months of shipping left we look for inventories to be very tight going into new crop. AMPAC has had a great year and it's exciting to see all the hard work paying off. We owe a big thank you to all of AMPAC's customers for your part in this. I would also like to take this time to thank my co-workers and employees for the exceptional job they have done the last few months. From those in the warehouse, our office staff, to our phenomenal sales manager (Yes that would be you Dave.), we could not do it without each one of your efforts.

The following are excerpts from an article on Chicory written by Dr. Richard Watson on Chicory. Dr. Watson is a former forage agronomist with Ampac Seed Company and is now an Extension Forage Specialist at Mississippi State University. Oasis Chicory from Ampac Seed Company is performing very well in the trials at MSU. These excerpts give some background on chicory, results from the study at MSU, and management tips to know how to manage Oasis Chicory for success.

What is Chicory?

Chicory is neither a grass nor a legume. It is classified as a forage herb or forb. Chicory originates from southern Europe (similar to Alfalfa), and is a short lived (3-5 years) perennial. While chicory is a cool-season plant, it is summer-active and continues to be quite productive during the Mississippi summer. At first glance, chicory looks more like a pasture weed, such as curly dock, or the mescaline lettuce you buy in the grocery store, rather than a forage crop. I am also told that chicory is used as

a coffee substitute in Louisiana. Chicory has a deep tap root (which makes it very drought tolerant) like alfalfa, broad 'lettuce-like' leaves that grow from a crown, and produces 4-5 foot tall stems with pink, purple, and blue flowers.

Here is what we have found so far.

Our grazing trial at the MAFES Holly Springs Branch Station has indicated that spring average daily gain was about 2.75 lb/day, and gain per acre was in excess of 600 lb/acre over a 56-day grazing period, with an average stocking rate of 3.16, 600lb steers/acre. These results were comparable to Marshall annual ryegrass. During the summer (July and August) we could stock one and a half 700lb steers/acre and maintain growth rates at 1.82 lb/day. Preliminary data from the fall of 2005 indicate that ADG is similar to spring but carrying capacity is more like two 600lb steers/acre (bearing in mind we had a severe drought in the fall of 2005). So the first year's data suggest that we have an exceptionally high productivity forage crop capable of growing stocker steers throughout much of the year. Agronomic plot trials at Starkville indicate that chicory will yield in excess of 6 tons of forage/acre from March through November...Agronomic plot trials at Starkville indicate that chicory will yield in excess of 6 tons of forage/acre from March through November. We are also finding that variety selection may be very important in Mississippi. We have three varieties (Oasis, Puna, and Choice) that vary in levels of a compound called lactucin (Oasis = high, Puna = intermediate, and Choice = low). While we have not seen any yield difference between the three varieties in the first year, we have started to note a rapid decline in the stand of the low lactucin variety, indicating that this has a role in persistence in the MS environment.

Management of chicory

Chicory is best managed as a specialty crop if you intend to utilize it as a perennial. We have had success establishing chicory on a prepared seedbed and sod-seeding into an herbicide-treated field (clip or make hay in August, spray 2.5 pt roundup/acre and seed chicory at 5-7 lb/A in early September). Seeding dates for chicory appear quite flexible, with a potential window from after the last spring frost to about 3-4 weeks before the first fall frost being optimal...Chicory can tolerate soil pH down to 5 but tends to do better when lime, P and K are applied according to soil test recommendations for the cool-season grasses. Chicory also responds well, in fact needs, regular nitrogen applications. We have had success in a grazing situation with 33 lb N/acre applications (100 lb/A ammonium nitrate) at planting, and then during each month of grazing.

Management of Chicory...Chicory needs to be strip or rotationally grazed so that pregrazing forage height is about 8-14" and postgrazing (what you leave behind) is no shorter than 3-4". High stocking rates (over 5 head/acre) may be needed to keep on top of spring growth. If you are unable to apply this grazing pressure, you may need to clip to a height of 10-12" if flowering stems start to develop. The flowering stems are generally quite palatable but letting them go will reduce leaf production, quality, and overall yield. An extension publication will be produced this year outlining in more detail the establishment and management practices for chicory...

To read the entire article visit www.



Weather...who can predict it? Fall in the East was warmer and drier than usual. Winter snows came in December, with hardly a trace in January and February. Spring weather moved in as early as March 1! March 2006 was the driest on record here in central Pennsylvania with the same similarities in other parts of the East. I noticed farmers working the fields earlier and landscapers trying to get a jump on the Spring rush early in March.

The common thread in the above paragraph is dry and warm! That is why in turf I encourage the use of Turf Type Tall Fescue in new seeding and overseeding any areas that were damaged by winter conditions or the lack of. When selecting your varieties look for good drought tolerance as well as winter hardiness. I recommend using **Cochise III**, **Ninja 2**, and **Expedition**. These varieties will withstand heavy traffic and drought conditions. Please visit our web site or NTEP for performance data. **Cochise III** is a semi dwarf variety that handles lower mowing heights and exhibits a fine leaf that has one of the darkest green colors on the market. **Cochise III** performs very well in drought tolerance and disease resistance. **Ninja 2** is drought tolerant and exhibits a very dense turf under lower mowing heights. **Ninja 2** has a fine leaf texture, improved disease resistance and good genetic color. **Expedition** was selected for high drought and heat tolerance. **Expedition** is a "spreading type variety" that performs better than other spreading varieties in the NTEP trials. Expedition has a finer leaf, tolerates lower mowing heights and performs very well in high traffic studies. Using **Cochise III**, **Ninja 2**, and

Expedition in a blend will give you the confidence that your seed will perform very well in athletic fields, home lawns, golf course roughs, and any where else you may need to have a beautiful stand of turf that is dark green in color and drought resistant.

Now is the time to be putting your final thoughts on your wildlife food plots together and making seed selections. **AMPAC Seed** has three **Wildlife Perfect** mixtures to offer that will fill your needs. **Wildlife Perfect Grazing** mixture is a perennial legume mixture with the added benefit of **Plot Enhancer™ Brand Chicory**. The mixture will perform very well in all soils even though it was designed for poorer soil conditions. **Wildlife Perfect Ultimate Plus** mixture is also a perennial legume mixture with **Rack Builder™ Brand Alfalfa** and **Plot Enhancer™ Brand Chicory**. This mixture is designed for better soil conditions with fertility and pH being in check. **Wildlife Perfect Brassica** mixture is 95% brassica with the addition of **Plot Enhancer™ Brand Chicory**. This mixture is the perfect “Harvest Plot” mix that will attract game through out the hunting season. By adding the chicory to this mixture, you can go back after the hunting season and frost seed either the **Grazing** or **Ultimate Plus** mixture into the plot and have perennial food plot for 4-5 years if managed properly. Remember, by improving the habitat with food plots in the area you enjoy your outdoor activities; you will have better success in viewing or harvesting larger healthy animals. **Wildlife Perfect** mixtures are packaged in very retail friendly bags that come in ¼ acre, ½ acre, 1 acre, and bulk bags.



Dear “Valued Customer”. Do you get letters in the mail addressed to you like that? When I see those letters I generally think that the company forgot my name...so I immediately feel “less-valued.” I guess they didn’t want to address me as “Dear ‘Bargain Hunter’ Customer”... which would possibly be more appropriate!

The buzz in sales and marketing is to sell “value-added” products or services. But what does it mean to be...or to have...a “valued” customer? And what are “value-added” products or services? Can a “value added” products and services still be a bargain? I was curious to get answers to these questions so I asked for definitions from

three folks that I trust to be honest with me and that I know come from various backgrounds (my wife, a former national sales and marketing manager, and the most practical guy I know). Their answers show that there are different perceptions of the meaning of these words!

Definitions by my panel include: **“Bargain”**: “a bargain is getting what you agreed to at a price better than you imagined it to be”; “the acquisition of an item at a price better than offered anywhere else”; and “cheap-2nd hand...” **“Value”**: “worth”; “when I think of value I think of ‘value-added’”; and “value is getting as much or more than you bargained for and paid for.” **“Value-added”**: “could be a marketing gimmick”; “Increase in worth”; and “value added would be any product or service that adds value to the existing relationship.”

When Ampac Seed Company calls on you we do view you as a “valued customer”. Sometimes we offer you “bargains” and we work very hard to offer “value-added” services and products...in the good sense of the meaning! We do our best back up our “marketing” with facts so you never need to think of the word “gimmick” when we call.

So what “value-added” products and services does Ampac have to offer? Our **Turf Perfect®**, **Pasture Perfect®**, and **Wildlife Perfect®** lines offer sales helps such as banners, signs, customized brochures, and top-flight packaging that help you and your customers sell more improved products. These are all sales helps that provide multiple tools to increase the value of our products to your customers. But our products are what really add value to you and the end user. I’ll list a few examples of how our forage products really do add value.

Quartet Tetraploid Perennial Ryegrass is one of the very few ryegrass varieties in the world that has been rigorously tested for improved animal performance. Quartet was tested against four other varieties of ryegrass for animal weight gain in NZ. In these replicated tests Quartet proved to provide significantly more weight gain than the nearest competitor. How much more? *Between 20% and 56% more gain per day!* That is a value added ryegrass! Not only is Quartet a high yielding, late-maturing variety...it should also provide more profit to the end user!

Tekapo Orchardgrass is well known across much of the country as the best grazing orchardgrass on the market. Tekapo is the foundation to many of our Pasture Perfect® mixes. But Tekapo adds much more value than just being excellent under grazing. Tekapo is also among the

most disease resistant and drought tolerant varieties on the market. These past few years in many areas where drier than normal conditions has been a problem Tekapo has been the only grass to stay green during most of the summer. Again, often providing more profit to the end user!

Perfect Fit™ Forage Brassicas: Appin Forage Turnips and Pasja Hybrid Brassica stand alone at the top when it comes to value in the turnip family. For instance: in university studies, Appin had the same dry matter yield as Purple Top Turnips and Barkant Tankard Turnips, yet provided significantly more protein per acre! After *just one harvest* Appin provided over 300 more pounds per acre above Barkant and more than 700 pounds more than Purple Tops. Value= \$210/acre additional protein at current protein values - \$15 “extra” seed cost = \$195/acre additional profit...and the Appin should give more than one grazing.

Ampac Brand Alfalfa’s Attention and Radiant-AM are also ‘value-added’ products! With the excellent standability and yield of Attention and top yields and forage quality of Radiant-AM...these varieties provide excellent value to you and the end user. Attention is quickly becoming the top choice for hay producers that are looking to cut every 25-30 days and take that “extra” cutting that many varieties cannot provide. Radiant-AM is a “WOW” variety when it comes to forage quality and yield. Radiant-AM works best when producers “push it” for top forage production for dairy quality hay or haylage.

As you can see, Ampac has **value-added programs, value-added products** and we have “**value-added**” **salesmen** strategically located in the field to provide meetings, consulting, and services. You might say Ampac Seed Company is a “value-added” seed company! Because of this fact I hope you find it valuable do business with Ampac Seed Company! We certainly find it **valuable** to be associated with each of you.

What “**bargains**” do we have today? Well...you’d better call Aaron for those! The boss always has the authority to offer more bargains!

Dave Robison is the National Sales Manager and Agronomist for Ampac Seed Company. Dave is located in Winona Lake, IN.