Grey Wooded Forage Association

"Creating an Awareness of Forages"

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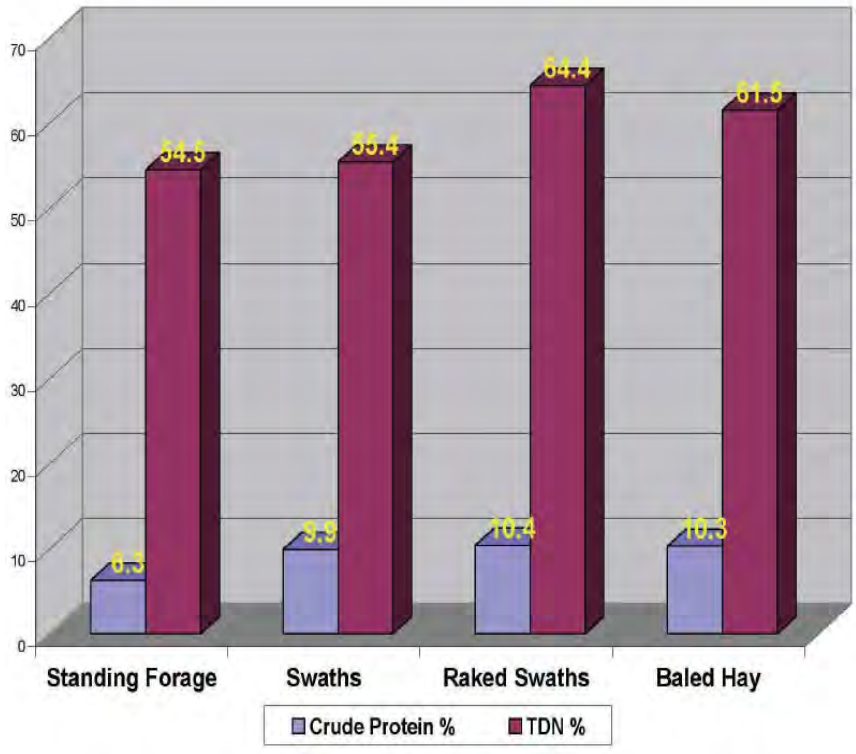
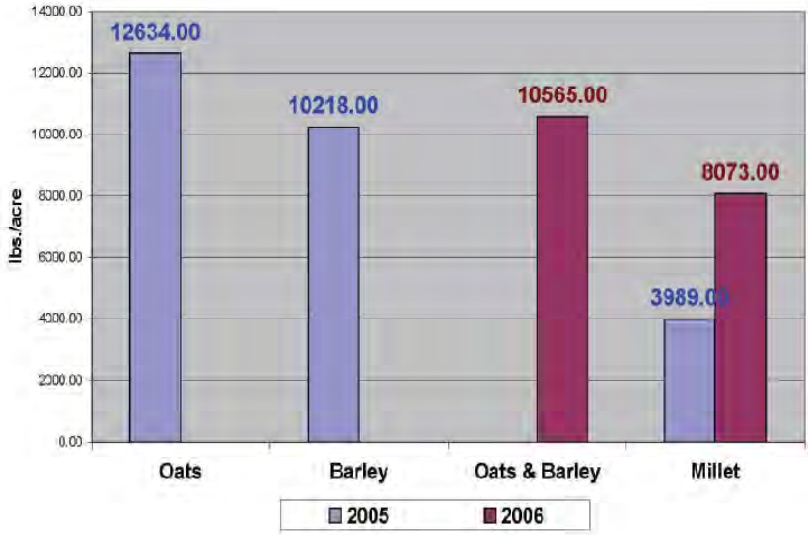
Forage Comparisons 2005/06

Perennial Forage Feed Quality Comparison (Protein, Digestible Energy & TDN)

On November 21, 2006 we took feed samples at Allan & Wanda Sunde's farm to compare the feed values between standing forage, swaths, two swaths raked together and baled hay. These samples were all taken from the same part of the field to minimize variations in the forages from forage species compositions and soil differences. What's interesting to note is that the protein level in the standing forage was the lowest. We think that is partly due to continued maturation and partly due to weathering. The maturing process of the forages in the swaths and baled hay were stopped when cut. It looks like protection from weathering was just as good in the swaths as in the baled hay. This was surprising after a warm, wet October. Swath grazing the perennial swaths would cut out the costs of baling and hauling, making it an economically viable alternative.

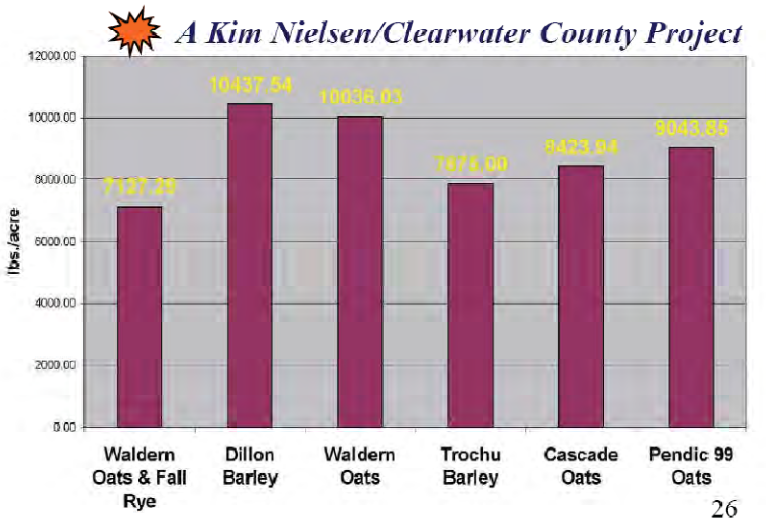


Millet Compared to Oats and Barley in 2005 & 2006 at Allan and Wanda Sunde's



In 2005, Allan seeded the oats, barley and millet I three separate strips. While the oats and barley yielded well, the millet only yielded 2 ton/acre. This was mainly due to the cold, wet growing season we had in 2005. Millet is C4 plant like corn and needs heat to produce well. There was even some frost damage to the millet in August, 2005.
In 2006, Allan seeded the oats and barley as a mixture and seeded the millet in alternating strips with that mix. This year the millet fared much better, thanks to the hot, dry July we had. In both years we noted that the cows really liked the millet and cleaned it up well, including the stubble.

Swath Grazing Varieties Yield Comparison at Kim & Nellie Nielsen's



This year Kim seeded the five oats and barley varieties and the oats/fall rye mix side by side to compare yield differences. All were seeded with Clearwater County's No-Till Drill they have available to rent. Interesting to note is the Dillon Barley, a hooded variety without awns. It was the top yielder and was competitive with the oats varieties in feed quality as well. Its protein level was at 8.7% while protein levels for the oats varieties were 10.2%, 10.5%,10.9% and Trochu Barley at 7.3%. Dillon Barley had a TDN of 65.5% compared to 70.7% for the Trochu Barley and 59.7, 61.2% and 62.0%. While the oats/fall rye mix was the lowest in yield, its protein level was at 12.2% and TDN at 59.9%. We'll have to see what the Nielsen's do for the 2007 growing season.