

Elstel Farm & Seeds

“The Crabgrass Seed Folks”

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Fact Sheet 2008

‘Quick-N-Big’ Crabgrass Variety- A Followup

The year 2007 was the first year ‘Quick-N-Big’ (QNB) crabgrass was available . The year 2008 was the third year it had been grown in fields at our farm. During these three years the grass was subjected to a range of among the driest and hottest of summer seasons (2006) to among the best we can expect in western Oklahoma (2007). The 2007 year had some short dry times, but considering all of summer, it was one of the best for growing grass that can be in the 26 inch rainfall belt of our farm location. These ranges in season’s provide information for other regions.

The year 2008 marks the 14th year we have provided a Crabgrass Management Fact Sheet for our clients and forage researchers. It is the 17th year we have provided Red River Crabgrass (RRCG) seed to grass producers of the USA. We continue to emphasize high quality RRCG **Certified Seed**. We are pleased and content to have helped put a blanket on a bit of Mother Earth during these years, and to be of service to grassland producers of the USA. We plan to be of service many more years.

The 2007 season helped Quick-N-Big live up to it’s name. To repeat: It was named Quick-N-Big because it GERMINATES QUICK, has QUICK SEEDING GROWTH to first grazing time, and RE-GROWS QUICK if it is **managed properly**, and it has BIG leaves and grows BIG if allowed to continue growing. The grass can grow very fast for a crabgrass , up to 2 to 3 inches per day, after it is well tillered. When we harvested the mid-summer crop in 2007, much of the grass measured an average of **43 inches tall**, and with some spots even taller in the best soils. All of this was free standing without being held up in any way. This testifies to it’s ability. But this **is not the height** to go for in managing the forage aspects of the variety. This height is too tall for usual grazing or haying (see below), but it shows the potential of the grass’s production.

When the grass is allowed to get too tall before grazing or haying, it shades the lower leaves too much. This causes the lower leaf to yellow and die. Then when the grass is grazed or cut for

hay, that leaves a naked , “tooth pick” stem. That then causes very slow re-growth, and plant stem death if it does not rain immediately. So, what should the manager do??

As with Red River Crabgrass, grazing should be started when the pasture is a minimum of 4 to 6 inches tall. Rotation Graze!! Re-grazings should be done when the plants are six to 12 inches tall, or up to 18 inches tall at maximum during lush conditions, and when there is **still green leaves on the lower stem**. Haying or cutting for silage should be done when the plants are 18 to 24 inches tall and when there is still green leaves on the bottom of the stems. Do not wait for the maximum growth height---unless it is only a one cut per summer situation. Cut to leave a lot of green leaf. When the Quick-N-Big is cut or grazed, the field should still have a green cast to it, indicating that there is a lot of lower leaf on the stubble to generate new growth. **Leave a 3 to 6 inch stubble** until the last grazing or haying, then be free to take it as short as practical---to the ground , so to speak. When managed as above, the grass re-growth and total production is good.

For a continuous style of grazing, set the stocking rate to gradually graze the forage over many weeks. For **well fertilized QNB on dryland**, this could be from 800 to 1200 pounds of weight per acre.

One exception to the above pertains to when the manager wants to accumulate **one massive hay cutting or silage cutting**, and is not interested in good re-growth. In that case, just let it grow to maximum growth, then cut it short one time, and **do not expect good re-growth in this case**.

In summary—QNB is a robust, productive, tall type of crabgrass. It can get too tall, for good re-growth management, before grazing or haying. Using the plant then can cause more suppression than usual or good. **THINK AHEAD!** QNB can be ready to hay today and be too tall 3 to 5 days later. It can be harvested well then, but the extra growth at harvest can lead to added re-growth suppression.

Management of fertilization, weed control, and volunteer stands is much like that for Red River Crabgrass. Please refer to those Fact Sheets.

QNB has adequate seed dormancy to generate volunteer stands the next year. We have always gotten good volunteer stands. However, a lot of germination of new seed dropped to the ground can occur the year of drop. This more so than with Red River Crabgrass. There is still an advantage to using AGED seed of QNB when possible, but it does not appear as critical as with RRCG. Speed of germination is very quick with QNB compared to other crabgrasses of the same age seed.

QUICK-N-BIG IS A PROPRIETARY VARIETY OF ELSTEL FARM AND SEEDS. SEED IS AVAILABLE ONLY FROM ELSTEL FARM AND SEEDS & COOPERATING DEALERS.

Twelve other free CRABGRASS MANAGEMENT FACT SHEETS are available on request.

