

Should I Seed Winter Barley?

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You should; at least on a small scale in 20-30 acres, if not on a large area!

Why should I seed winter barley? What advantage I would have from winter barley as compared to spring barley? You could get somewhat higher forage and grain yields from winter barley as compared to spring barley. Average yields from the two crops, over three years of systematic field experiments at TBARS (2009-2012) indicated that (i) forage dry matter yields from winter and spring barley were 5.82 t/ha and 5.55 t/ha, respectively and (ii) grain yields from winter and spring barley were 3.98 t/ha and 3.52 t/ha, respectively. Winter and spring barley forage equaled in protein content (12.8 %), ADF (30/29 %), NDF (45), TDN (66 %) and NEL (1.49/1.51 Mcal/ kg); NEM was higher in winter barley and NEG somewhat higher in spring barley. Winter barley would have some other advantages that winter wheat has; for example, spreading of field operations (seeding and harvesting at different times as compared to spring cereals), coverage of soil and extraction of residual fertilizer nutrients from the soil. In our experiments, winter barley was seeded on September 5 during all the years and was harvested for forage on June 27 in 2010, July 6 in 2011 and June 25 in 2012. Another crop (direct seeded alfalfa/or alfalfa under seeded in barley or oats for forage) could be raised after winter barley. We had seeded alfalfa one year at TBARS on July 16 and we got a bumper crop! Other advantage of growing winter barley is that due to its fast growth and dense canopy (broader leaves than those of spring barley) it doesn't need any herbicide spray for weed control. The crop has a smothering effect on the weeds.

When should I seed winter barley and which variety would you recommend? First week of September is optimum for seeding winter barley. New cultivar McKellar is much more winter hardy than the earlier variety McGregor. Ideal plant population in winter barley is 300-400 plants/m². This would translate to 120 kg viable seeds/ha or 48 kg viable seeds/acre. It is advisable to put ~10-15 % extra seed; because seed viability is seldom 100 % and all viable seeds may not emerge from the soil (due to soil and weather conditions).

Where do I source the seed? Contact Hyland Seeds at the following address:

Hyland Seeds

2 Hyland Drive P.O. Box 130
Blenheim ON N0P 1A0
Tel: 800-265-5225 Ext. 303, Fax: 519-676-5674

Alternatively, you may also try

Dow AgroScience Canada Inc.

2100-450 1st SW
Calgary, AB, Canada T2P 5H1
Tel: 800-667-3852, Fax: 888-296-6188

What fertilizers should I apply and when? Apply P (as 11-52-0; preferably drilled with the seed) and K (through 0-0-60) as per soil tests. You don't have to necessarily apply N at seeding unless you grow winter barley after pure grass sod; in which case you should apply 30-40 kg N/

ha from urea (65-87 kg/ha)/or both urea (44-65 kg/ha) and ammonium sulphate (50 kg/ha). Balance N to make up a total of 80-90 kg N/ha could be applied in early spring.

If you have any other questions contact me at 807-475-1373/or at tarloksahota@tbaytel.net.

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