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## Burlington Coop Association

Newsletter Date

September 1, 2010

Closed Monday September 6th for Labor Day

	Regular Price	Sale Price
Sweetlix 20% All Natural Tubs 200 #	\$ 61.50	\$ 53.50
Bovalyx 28% Cooked Tubs 200 #	\$ 90.00	\$ 84.00
Deer Corn 50 # Bag		\$ 6.50

### Autumn Crop Tips

By Chris Eubanks, Agronomist

Fall is a busy time for Oklahoma farming operations. Planting time is here or approaching for alfalfa, canola and wheat. Alfalfa, corn, soybeans, milo and forage sorghums are being harvested. And there's always something going on with cattle.

For this month's newsletter, here is some alfalfa news and a few agronomic tips to help your farming operation be more efficient and profitable.

### Avoid the Early Fall Harvest Window

When taking the season's last cut of alfalfa, avoid harvesting from mid-September to mid-October. Why? At that time, prior to alfalfa going dormant for the winter, it is trying to store as many nutrients in the roots and crown as possible to survive the winter. Alfalfa generally starts to go dormant in mid-October (depending on its fall dormancy rating). If cut during the last two weeks of September through the first two weeks of October, the plant has to use the nutrients stored in the roots for stem and leaf re-growth. There is not enough growing days to replenish those nutrients. Consequently, the plant may hit dormancy with low levels of nutrients in the roots/crown and could suffer winter damage.

However, if harvest is delayed until mid-October, the plant's nutrient supply is not harmed and winter survivability is better. At the mid-October (especially for fall dormancy 3 and 4 types), the plant is shutting down while it's being harvested, and it won't try to re-grow stems and leaves. Therefore, the nutrients remain in the roots/crown for the winter, and your alfalfa stand can enter the following spring healthier.

### Alfalfa and Soil pH

Alfalfa is very sensitive to acidity. If planted into soil that has a low pH (under 6.5), that stand may never hit its yield and persistence potential. The trauma of germinating and beginning life in a low pH can scar the plant for life. So if you're pH isn't up to par at planting time, you may be better off liming now and planting next year.

### What Alfalfa Variety is Best?

If you are planting conventional alfalfa this season, keep a few things in mind when making your seed buying decision. Alfalfa development is advancing at a rapid pace. The varieties of today are far superior than varieties released just a few years ago. To get the most bang for your buck, look for varieties with the following characteristics:

Fall Dormancy Rating (FD): 4 (a 4 in northern Oklahoma is perfect for a five- or six-cut system in our climate).

Winterhardiness Rating: 2 or lower (rated from 1-5, with 1 being the best).

Disease Resistance Index (DRI): 29-30 (30 is the top score, most reputable varieties are at least a 29).

A great variety, for example, is Rebound 5.0 by Croplan Genetics, which has a FD of 4, winterhardiness rating of 2, and DRI rating of 30. It is also a very drought-tolerant variety.

### Roundup Ready Alfalfa Update

When is Roundup Ready Alfalfa going to be available? Since I work for the world's leading alfalfa research company, Land O'Lakes, which developed Roundup Ready alfalfa in cooperation with Monsanto, I get this question numerous times every day. Nothing is certain, but we could hear some good news this winter. I could have some detailed info to pass along in a few months.

*Chris Eubanks is an agronomist for Winfield Solutions (the seed and chemical division of Land O'Lakes, Inc.). He specializes in forages (including alfalfa and forage sorghums), along with canola, corn and soybeans. Chris lives near Guthrie and can be reached at [cpeubanks@landolakes.com](mailto:cpeubanks@landolakes.com).*