

Progress Report

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

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FIELD WINDSTRIP NEW TECHNOLOGY FROM THE LLPMC

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The Los Lunas Plant Materials Center (LLPMC) is currently developing a new plant species for use in Field Windstrips for the state of New Mexico. The LLPMC is working in cooperation with the Deming NRCS Field Office, the Deming Soil and Water Conservation District, and Mr. Alan Akers who is a farmer and District Cooperator.

Background

In October 1999, the LLPMC responded to a request for assistance from Mr. Akers. As a result, the LLPMC and the offices previously mentioned established a Field Windstrip on Mr. Akers farm, located near Columbus, New Mexico.

In October 1999 and May 2000, the PMC planted Giant Sacaton (*Sporobolus wrightii*) transplants grown at the PMC. The transplants were started from seed produced at the PMC, and they were specifically developed for use in Field Windstrip situations.

The Field Windstrip consists of two rows spaced five-feet apart. The plants in each row are also spaced five-feet apart, and planted in staggered formation. These plants should provide adequate wind protection within one-to two-years of growth.

Mr. Akers intends to protect his high-value crops from strong Spring winds using the Field Windstrip. Winds can carry soil particles across the surface of the soil causing considerable damage to tender young plants. The Giant Sacaton should slow the velocity of the wind and it should protect the plants from abrasive soil particles.

Plant Description

The Giant Sacaton plant is a robust, warm-season perennial bunchgrass. Samples at the LLPMC have grown over 8-feet tall and 6-feet wide. This plant produces an abundance of foliage, and the seed stalks do not lodge after one season. These attributes make it an ideal plant for use in Field Windstrips.

Future Work

Follow-up evaluations and additional plantings are planned for Mr. Akers farm. If you have questions about this trial, please contact the Deming Field Office or the Los Lunas Plant Materials Center.

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