

EVALUATION AND SEED PRODUCTION OF PRAIRIE CORDGRASS (*Spartina pectinata*)
AND WHITETOP (*Scolochloa festucacea*) IN THE NORTHERN GREAT PLAINS.

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Developing adapted seed sources of native wetland plants is a high priority set by many conservation agencies/groups for improving wildlife habitat, soil stabilization, and forage production. Prairie cordgrass and whitetop plants were collected vegetatively in North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota, in the United States; and in Manitoba, Canada, cooperatively with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and Ducks Unlimited Canada. Individual plants were evaluated in a spaced-plant nursery and selections were made based on vigor, leafiness, seed production, and phenology. Rhizome material from selected plants of prairie cordgrass were planted with a tree planter to establish a 2-acre seed increase field in the spring of 1994. The plants established readily and about 10 pounds of cleaned seed was harvested the first year. Approximately 150 pounds of cleaned seed was harvested in 1995 and will be distributed to interested growers and used in trial plantings. No insect problems were noted. Combining and processing the seed were relatively easy operations with no apparent problems. A tree planter was also used to plant an increase field of whitetop. Rhizome material was planted in September, 1995. Earlier planting was planned, but summer flooding occurred on the site. Establishment was not as good as the prairie cordgrass. Additional rhizomes were planted in June, 1996. Studies are in progress regarding seeding dates, rates, and planting techniques for both the prairie cordgrass and whitetop. Developing northern seed sources of these two important species will enhance wetland restoration and development efforts in the upper region of the Northern Great Plains.

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