

Grass for Gas?  
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You probably have seen or heard the commercials for ethanol-blended fuels made from corn and how increased use of bio-fuels may someday reduce our reliance on imported oil products and reduce air pollution. However, not much research has taken place to evaluate perennial plants for biofuel feed stocks.

The Aberdeen PMC began cooperating this summer with the USDA-ARS Forage Seed and Cereal Research Unit in Corvallis, Oregon to evaluate perennial native grasses for potential use as biofuel feed stocks.

Forage samples were collected from 13 accessions in the Grass Display Nursery at the PMC. Samples were collected at the vegetative, boot, flowering and seed fill stages. The samples were air-dried and shipped to the ARS Research Unit for biochemical analysis. The objective of this study is to identify the change in lignin, hemicellulose, cellulose, and sugars as a plant grows. Data analysis is not yet completed for samples collected this year.

The PMC also provided to the ARS Research Unit standard seed packets of 'Magnar' basin wildrye, 'Sodar' streambank wheatgrass, and 'Nezpar' Indian ricegrass for greenhouse studies to verify the field sampling.

The PMC plans to continue to cooperate with the ARS Research Unit in Corvallis to evaluate perennial grasses for potential use as biofuel feed stocks.

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