

Native Plant Materials Development: A Joint Ducks Unlimited and Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada Project

Grant McLeod¹, Bruce Coulman² and Paul Jefferson¹

¹Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Swift Current, Saskatchewan, Canada; ²Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada

Interest in native plant materials has been increasing for the last decade. Native species can be used for reclamation, re-vegetation, wildlife habitat seeding and grazing by domestic livestock. Ducks Unlimited Canada needed a reliable source of genetically diverse varieties of native grasses and legumes for seeding dense nesting cover in the prairie region. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada scientists were interested in the grazing potential of native species seeded on previously cropped land. A joint project was undertaken to develop and commercialize varieties of several important native grasses and legumes. Recently, a private seed company has begun to commercialize these variety releases and has reported good marketing opportunities. This paper will report on the successes and challenges faced by the project during the development of these varieties.