

SEED PRODUCTION OF TEMPERATE FORAGE LEGUMES IN SOUTHERN BRAZIL

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The Campanha Region, located in the Pampa Biome, in southern Brazil, was known in the 70s for its great production of seeds of forage legumes, mainly birdsfoot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus* L.), white clover (*Trifolium repens* L.) and red clover (*T. pratense* L.). Several factors contributed to the disruption of this production chain and disorganization of the formal market, such as the marketing of low-quality cheap seeds. The Brazilian Seed Law, published in 2005, strengthened programs for the genetic improvement of forages in public research institutions. Since 2010, the Embrapa team has started to establish partnerships to motivate the resumption of legume seed production, taking advantage of the experience accumulated by the producers of the Campanha Region, with the objective to improve the impact of the new forage cultivars on the livestock activity, by using seeds of high quality. Some producers have shown interest in production methods to improve seed quality, and are being followed by researchers. The objective of this interaction is to identify and prioritize the limiting factors, and overcome them with existing technologies or generating new knowledge through applied research. The main problem was the contamination of the production fields by plants of weed species, which made it difficult to obtain seed lots meeting legal quality standards. In this case, technology transfer actions were developed, related to the process of sowing and weed control. Additionally, the research focused on sowing methods and the biology of weed species. Another important aspect is the management of defoliation, which can help control weeds, standardize flowering, and also generate extra income from the sale of hay. There are currently producers within the official production system, and the seeds of temperate forage legumes produced in Brazil are beginning to move into the formal market.

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