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**North American Millets Alliance**
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# Forage Millets Up 27% in 2026

Ranchers and hay producers in the United States were able to react to anticipated drought by planting 27 percent more forage millets in 2026 over 2025, according to figures from USDA reports. Millets, annual grasses generally planted in late spring, produce high-quality livestock feed in two to three months.

The U.S. commercially produces six types of millets (proso, foxtail, Japanese, pearl, teff, and brown top). Although the grains of all millets are used for human consumption, all except proso are mainly produced in the U.S. for forage and wild game habitat. (Only proso and teff are produced at scale in this country for comestible grains.)

Ranchers, with pastures too short to graze, planted hay millets, like foxtail, Japanese, and teff, whereas commercial feed producers planted whichever millets that fit their soil type, harvest window, and buyer needs.

Foxtail millet also goes by other names. It is sometimes referred to as Italian millet when its grain is harvested for food uses. When cut for hay or grazed, foxtail millet is referred to as “hay millet.” For all uses, foxtail millet increased plantings by thirty-three percent this year.

Common millet, a catch-all category for forage millets, is up twenty-seven percent over 2025.

Pearl millet plantings were up over 18 percent in 2026 probably because following a rain it regrows profusely after cutting. Pearl, the tallest dryland millet, is often bailed or chopped then grazed in the fall because it does not have prussic acid like sorghum and Sudan grass crosses.

Japanese millet planted for forage is up 13.6 percent. Like other millets, Japanese millet grain is also used for specialty foods, imported as “barnyard millet.”

With growing awareness of teff as a food and feed crop, increased planting of it is a big surprise again. Thirty-one states planted teff on fourteen percent more acres in 2026.

Drought conditions across the Plains have forced ranchers to begin feeding baled hay much earlier this year. Thankfully, forage millets will fulfill much of their needs going into the winter.

Closing out a year of increased plantings and high demand for millets as grain or forage, it is a good idea to lock in millet seed early for 2027 plantings.

*About the author: Gary W. Wietgrefe has been a U.S. Certified Crop Advisor for three decades, written two books on proso millet, coordinated proso irrigation research at Gobi-Altai Province, Mongolia (State University) and Uludag University, Bursa, Turkey, and supports North American Millets Alliance (NAMA) as senior agronomist.*