AGS 104—A New Rye Cultivar for Winter Forage and Silage Production

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AG 104 is an early winter rye cultivar that was co-developed by the University of Florida and the University of Georgia for early season forage production, which suits various livestock operations.

The average rye season lasts from December through April in the southeastern United States. While some rye cultivars produce early-season forage, others are typically late in the season. During the course of the growing season, several rye cultivars may be blended or broad-based populations may be used to produce tonnage fairly evenly.

Rye production is required more in December, January, and February than in March and April by southeastern livestock producers. Typically by mid-April, the summer perennial grasses appear from dormancy and begin to grow. Earlier rye growth accelerates the winter grazing period where early forage production is desirable. It is particularly useful for dairy silage operations where cool-season forages are followed by early-planted corn.

In 1996, AGS 104 (tested experimentally as: FLPL97P20) was created from an equal mixture of five strains that were developed in Griffin, GA:

- Strain 1 = Bates, W ALC7, and Florida 401
- Strain 2 = Maton, W ALC7, and Florida 401
- Strain 3 = Oklon, W ALC7, and Florida 401
- Strain 4 = NF 73, W ALC7, and Florida 401
- Strain 5 = BR1, W ALC7, and Florida 401

This mixture was selected throughout 1998 to 2001 (four cycles of selection) in Quincy, FL. Bates, Maton, Oklon, and NF 73 were developed by the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation. The BR1 is a rye from Brazil. The W ALC7 is a selection developed from Wrens Abruzzi, and it was released as Wrens 96. Good forage production, disease resistance, and high-seed yield were used as selection criteria for advancing each cycle.

AGS 104 has performed well in variety trials throughout the southeastern United States, particularly for early season forage production. It also performed well in blends with annual ryegrass for long-season forage production. AGS 104 most closely resembles Wrens 96, but AGS 104 is slightly shorter and earlier. AGS 104 has good leaf rust resistance.

AGS 104 was released exclusively to AgSouth Genetics for marketing.