

REGISTRATION OF PAWNEE BIG BLUESTEM¹
(Reg. No. 1)

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'PAWNEE' big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardi* Vitman) was released in 1963 by the Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station in cooperation with the Crops Research Division, Agricultural Research Service, U. S. Department of Agriculture. The variety traces to collections made in 1938 from native prairie in Pawnee County, Nebraska. After several generations of selections from open pollination, selected clones were isolated for pollination control in four groupings based on culm height and inflorescence color. Approximately 260 clones, selected from the best polycrossed progenies of these types, were field isolated for hybridization. Breeder seed (Syn-1) from intercrossing the clones in 1959 and 1960 was used to establish a foundation seed field in 1961. The first foundation seed (Syn-2) was produced in 1962.

Pawnee is typical of the big bluestem of the central prairies. Plants are long-lived perennials. They annually produce summer crops of waist-high, dark-green leaves and robust, tall seed stalks, with forked inflorescences which are brown to purplish at maturity. Awns of the sessile spikelets are prominent. There is considerable variation in the amount of pubescence in the seed heads.

Pawnee is a principal component of warm-season grass mixtures recommended in eastern and southern Nebraska for conservation and summer forage utilization. The variety has produced well in forage tests in Nebraska. It is superior in forage yield to local prairie types and ecotypes originating farther north and west. Pawnee is equal or superior to 'Kaw' in forage yields and is adapted farther north than Kaw. The variety makes its maximum growth in midsummer and is late maturing, approximately a week earlier in heading than Kaw bluestem in Nebraska.

Seed is best produced in irrigated rows with nitrogen fertilization applied in midspring. Seed crops will mature in central and eastern Nebraska as far north as the Platte Valley. In southeast Nebraska, seed matures for harvesting at the early frost dates.

Seed classes of Pawnee are breeder seed, foundation seed, and certified seed. The Nebraska Agricultural Experiment Station produces and maintains breeder seed from selected clones and foundation seed grown from breeder seed. Certified seed is grown from foundation seed and is the market class for conservation and forage production plantings.

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