

STANDABILITY EXPRESSION (LODGING RESISTANCE)

An evaluation method to determine the percentage of erect stems (> 45°).

Test accepted: March 1991 **Test updated:** June 2022 (new check cultivars)

Test authors: David Johnson, David Miller, Debra Sharpee, Mark Darling, Gary Hoard, Doug Miller, and Dan Undersander

PLANT CULTURE

Greenhouse

Container Bench, flat, or pot deep enough to allow root development

Media..... Sand, soil, or potting mix

Temp/Light..... 24 to 30°C; 16+ hr daylength

No. of Plants 20 to 25 per replication

No. of Reps 3 to 6 replications

Other Fertilize and control pests as necessary

FIELD ESTABLISHMENT

Location Transplant 8-12 week old plants to the field during mid to late May; direct seeding in rows or variety trial plots is acceptable

Spacing..... 0.3 to 0.4 m x 0.6 to 1.0 m transplanted; seeded rows or plots at standard seeding rate

Culture Maintain vigorous growth, control weeds and insects

Test Length Scoring can occur in year of establishment after 2 clip backs. Scoring the year after establishment to allow crown development is preferred.

Test Location No limitations, however, adverse environmental conditions such as heavy thunderstorms and/or strong winds may increase degree of lodging severity. Moderate to severe drought conditions may decrease lodging expression.

CLIPPING MANAGEMENT

Nurseries should be managed to allow plants to reach early to mid bloom stage during each regrowth cycle. Susceptible plants generally lodge by late bud to early bloom in the spring and early to mid bloom during the summer.

RATING

Rating can be taken once the susceptible check is uniformly lodged, generally during flowering. A 0 to 9 scale is used to rate standability (lodging resistance). This scale can be used to estimate percentage of erect stems (>45°) on individual spaced transplanted plants or seeded rows/plots. In practice, alfalfa is grown in solid seeded stands and is not spaced transplanted. Seeded rows/plots are preferred compared to spaced transplanted plants because neighboring plants within a canopy help support each other. Spaced transplanted plants score slightly lower for standability compared to seeded rows or plots. A single rating often provides accurate description of varietal differences. Multiple ratings will enhance classification.

9 Resistant 91 to 100% erect stems

7 Resistant..... 71 to 90% erect stems

5 Mod. Resistant.. 51 to 70 % erect stems

3 Mod. Resistant.. 31 to 50% erect stems

1 Susceptible..... 11 to 30% erect stems

0 Susceptible..... 0 to 10% erect stems

Alfalfa populations can be characterized for standability (lodging resistance) by calculating an average standability index (SI) and percentage of lodging resistant plants (combined percentage of plants rated as class 7 and 9).

CHECK CULTIVARS

	Approximate Expected Resistance (%)	Acceptable Range of Resistance (%)	Standability Rating	Typical SI
Resistant				
SW4412Y	68	55-80	8	6.9
54V13 ¹	75	60-85	8	7.0
Europe ²	60	45-75	7	6.5
Moderate Resistant				
55V50 ¹	40	25-50	5	5.8
Mercede ²	40	25-50	5	5.7
Susceptible				
5454	0	0-10	0	0.8
WL 319HQ	0	0-5	0	0.4

¹54V13 and 55V50 contain proprietary germplasm. As such, seed will only be made available to evaluators from Corteva. Prior to seed shipment, requestors must agree to use the seed exclusively for the testing purposes defined above; the Corteva materials transfer/use agreement is available from Corteva (contact Steve Damon; steve.damon@corteva.com); no other agreement is required.

²Only include the varieties Europe and/or Mercedes as comparison to European standards for lodging resistance. In France, the variety Europe is considered resistant to lodging and the variety Mercedes is considered moderately resistant to lodging. Europe and Mercedes are not adapted to North American field environments and may not persist for duration of test.

HELPFUL INFORMATION

A successful test must show a significant difference ($p=0.05$) between the resistant class check cultivar and the susceptible class check cultivar. The resistant class check must have an SI of 6.0 or higher. The susceptible class check must have an SI of 1.0 or lower. Readings taken too early may overestimate lodging resistance.

Irrigation and/or high soil nitrogen levels may increase degree of lodging severity. Standability expression (lodging resistance) is not known to vary by synthetic generation of seed. Seed yield is genetically correlated with lodging resistance.⁽¹⁾

REFERENCES

1. Bolaños-Aguilar, E.D., C. Huyghe, C. Ecalte, J. Hacquet, and B. Julier. 2002. Effect of cultivar and environment on seed yield in alfalfa. *Crop Sci.* 42:45-50.