



BMR Gene 6 and Brachytic Dwarf Sorghums by Dwayne Colvin

Advanta, the company that supplies Byron Seeds LLC with our sorghum lineup, is the world leader in sorghum research and development. The Alta program is their top line of sorghum products, the best of the best.

Almost everyone has had some experience with sorghum sudan. Most of us that tried sorghum sudan ten or twenty years ago have some form of horror story to tell:

A week of rain when they should have been harvesting, leaving you with sorghum 12-15 feet tall, or at least it was 12 feet tall until the wind came through.

Cows lost in a field for over a week: "Well, last I seen them, they was headed into that 10 foot tall patch of sorghum over there. So far, they ain't gaining on the stuff. I suppose if we don't get a drought real soon, we may not see those cows 'til fall."

Or nutrition problems: "Yup, as a matter of fact, I sent some of that sorghum off to the lab. It appears this sorghum has the same nutritional value as firewood, only it's not quite as digestible."

The good news is that Advanta has developed a totally new sorghum family in the past few years. One major change is the BMR gene 6 line of sorghums. BMR is a genetic mutation, (not a GMO trait), that produces less lignin which means higher digestibility and much better energy values than the old varieties. Highly digestible fiber means more available energy while still slowing down the rate of passage, pushing the rumen away from that constant verge of acidosis. Balancing a TMR on the edge of acidosis has limited the average life of a dairy cow to 1.8 lactations when they should be productive for 6 or even 8 lactations.

So Advanta has given us more digestible fiber and higher nutrition, but that's just the beginning. Another big breakthrough is yield. Advanta has developed one-cut forage sorghums that will out-yield corn silage, and on about a third less fertilizer and water. The brachytic dwarf gene gives us a plant that tops out at about seven feet tall and, with a stalk as big as your wrist, (ok, as big as my wrist), has tremendous standability with digestibility and high sugar content. Starch is 10-15% and protein is a couple of notches higher than corn silage. The days to maturity run from high eighties to about 110, depending on the variety. Add in male sterile and photoperiod sensitive varieties and you've got a lot of choices for every situation.

Advanta also has a sudan hybrid grass, AS9301, that will yield with the best of the sorghum sudans, with quicker regrowth. The reason why sudans were crossed with sorghums in the first place was to boost yield and regrowth in the sudan grasses. There was a tradeoff, however, as the sorghums brought a little less protein to the mix. With AS9301 sudan grass you can have high protein and high NDFd with tremendous yield and fast regrowth. Plus, this grass can be dry baled. We just don't have a better package to offer than this.

Advanta Alta program has bundled something really unique with their summer annuals. Advanta has a replant policy. If you have a field that has poor emergence, or gets froze off,



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drowned out, ate by bugs, or trampled by wild elephants, (ok, I'm stretching it), we'll replace the seed at 50% of the cost. With the spring weather we've had the past couple of years; a replant policy has some real appeal.

There's one more thing I should mention. We have a return policy on all Alta products. There are times when getting the seed into the ground just isn't going to happen. It's nice to know that you have the option of buying seed and returning it if things don't go according to plan.

You → "But Advanta products can be a bit pricey. I can buy sorghums from the local feed store cheaper than that."

Me → "I hear what you're saying, but are they a better investment for your money?"

Yes, it will cost a bit more per acre to plant Advanta forage sorghums, sorghum sudans and sudan grasses, but let's list the advantages:

More yield per acre on less inputs	\$\$
High fiber digestibility	\$\$
More protein	\$\$
Higher energy	\$\$
Faster regrowth	\$\$
Better herd health	\$\$
More lactations	\$\$
Option of returning seed	\$\$
Replant policy	+ \$\$
	= \$\$\$\$

Any way you add it up, Advanta sorghum products pay higher returns, every time.