The genus *Alopecurus* in the tribe Aveneae of the subfamily Festucoideae is comprised of about 50 species (Sieber & Murray, 1979) distributed throughout the temperate and cold zones of the Northern Hemisphere. The name *Alopecurus* was derived from the Greek words *Alopex* (fox) and *oura* (tail), alluding to the cylindric panicle that is characteristic of the genus. The genus contains annuals and perennials with growth habits ranging from caespitose to rhizomatous. Indigenous stands of many species of *Alopecurus* are utilized for forage in Europe, Asia, and North America (Hitchcock, 1971; Roshevits, 1980).

**SYSTEMATICS AND MORPHOLOGY**

The two most important cultivated forage grasses in the genus are meadow foxtail (*A. pratensis* L.) and creeping foxtail (*A. arundinaceus* Poir.). Meadow and creeping foxtail are separated taxonomically by the degree of awn exsertion (Sieber & Murray, 1981a), presence or absence of rhizomes (Sutherland, 1986), and glume and lemma characteristics (Clarke, 1980). Both species are tetraploids (*2n = 4x = 28*) (Johnsson, 1941). Sieber and Murray (1979) found a low frequency of multivalent formation in meadow foxtail and determined that the slight homology between the constituent genomes indicated the species behaved as a segmental allopolyploid. Premeiotic colchicine treatment significantly increased frequency of quadrivalents and deviations from random chromosome pairing, providing evidence for Murray et al. (1984) to suggest that the meiotic behavior of meadow foxtail was modified by nuclear attachment site genes.