Rockingham County Livestock Newsletter
March 2020

Livestock News, Updates, & Information

Thank you for reading this month's newsletter! I am excited to put together a cohesive resource for the most up to date information that is going on in our livestock community. Information is intended to be timely and practical. If you have any questions regarding any information provided, events, or suggestions on topics to be addressed, please reach out to Abby at abby_whitaker@ncsu.edu. Be sure to visit our website and our social media sites!

Visit our Website

Cancelled Upcoming Events

In efforts to do our part in keeping everyone safe, the following Livestock programs are cancelled. Please refer to our website and follow email announcements for the latest information regarding programs.

1. April & May Cattlemen's Meetings
2. All dates of Livestock Basics 101

Summer Annual Forage Success

Are you planning to incorporate summer annuals into your management plan this year? Watch this short video that covers the importance of properly preparing and fertilizing those summer annual crops! It is important to set yourself up for success!

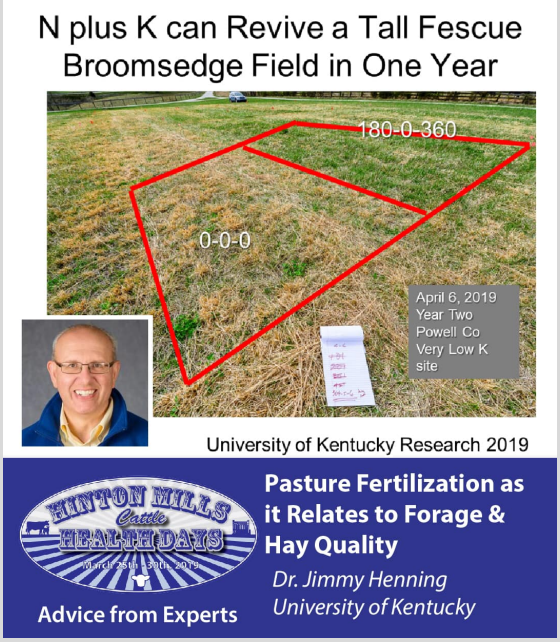
Summer Annual Success Video

Have a Broomsedge problem?

Pasture Fertilization as it Relates to Forage & Hay Quality

Dr. Jimmy C Henning
University of Kentucky Forage Extension

When it comes to fertilizing pastures, a lot of



times farmers either don't fertilize at all, or they fertilize with a shotgun approach. The number one thing I can tell you is that you don't know what you don't know, so step one is taking soil tests. Whether you choose to do them all at once or have a plan for testing a certain number of acres each year, fertilizing without having a soil test is a crap shoot at best, so make a plan and execute it.

The next thing I would say is if you can't fertilize every acre (and who can), then focus on the acres you have with the best soil. Find your good fields and make them produce the most that they'll produce.

Also don't forget that you have a lot of fertility moving around your farm in your hay. One way to add nutrients to your soil without buying any fertilizer is to feed in your lower fertility fields. Unroll the hay and let all the waste from the cattle move right back into your soil. One ton of hay has $35 of nutrients in it.

A really good illustration of the power of knowing what you need in your soil because you've soil tested comes from an ongoing trial in Powell County. We had a field that was full of broomsedge, which is an indicator of low soil fertility. Soil samples showed that the nutrient which was out of balance was potash (K). It's very easy to underapply K to your hay fields. Hay crops remove three to four times as much K as P, and Kentucky soils cannot replace that K as fast as it is removed.

Once we brought the soil profile back into alignment by adding 180 lb of K, the 180 lb of N we were also adding was able to work its magic, and in one year, we flipped the field from 80% broomsedge to 20% broomsedge. If you'd decided that field needed to be renovated by killing and reseeding, you'd have at least one year of non-production, the risk of erosion, and would have spent a lot of money. In this scenario, we did make a pretty heavy investment in fertilizer, but that was all we did.

The moral of that story is that although N is the heavy hitter in your NPK arsenal, if the P&K get too out of balance, you won't get any benefit from the nitrogen you apply. And how will you know if it's out of balance? Soil testing.

Abby's Corner

Pasture Renovation is an Ongoing Process

Dr. Matt Poore
NC State University
Extension Specialist

Hey everyone! My name is Abby Whitaker and I am the Livestock and Forage Crops Extension Agent for Rockingham County. Hopefully we have met or talked before, but if not, I look forward to meeting you soon!

I wanted to provide my contact information here, as well as a quick shoutout about what Extension can do for you!

Extension is your friendly neighborhood educational resource for all things agriculture! Our office houses agents that specialize in field crops, horticulture, family and consumer science, 4-H, and livestock! We want to help you!

My contact information is as follows:
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If you call me, please leave a message if I do not answer!

I love my job and look forward to continue serving Rockingham County!

See full article here:
Pasture Renovation Article

Healthy pastures are the key to efficiently feeding beef cattle in the humid regions of the United States. But, despite our efforts to do everything right, stands of most forages will eventually start to thin. This may be due to errors in your forage allocation that lead to overgrazing, letting fertility slip, or because some weed or another takes hold and competes with the desirable plants. The environment may also be to blame as severe drought, severe wet conditions leading to pugging (deep trampling), or flooding can all hurt stands.

In my area, there are many examples of good forage managers that have very nice pastures, and in the case of Kentucky-31 tall fescue, or bermudagrass, many pastures have persisted for over 50 years. Unfortunately, during the last five years the stresses listed above — too dry, too wet, or completely underwater — have taken a toll on even the pastures with the best management.

The Amazing Grazing program in North Carolina has been collaborating with other state and federal agencies to support pasture renovation by providing new no-till drills in counties where they are needed and to fund educational demonstrations across the state. These activities have led to a lot of discussion on how to best approach a renovation, and I will share some of that thought process here.
(See link for full article)

How much Fertilizer and Lime?

The only way to know exactly what your fields need is to take a soil sample! This is the easiest, fastest, and cheapest way to save money or at least know you're spending it on the right thing! Do yourself a favor and take a soil sample now! Soil samples are processed for free in North Carolina starting on April 1st, 2020. There will be a charge again this fall for the busy season.

How to Soil Sample

NC Soil Sample Form

Livestock Management Calendar

The following section will be monthly information to take into consideration for a year round management plan! Depending on the goals of your operation, these monthly tips may look different for you. However, the same general ideas can be adjusted and still be beneficial! We take care of our livestock year round, so here's a chance to look at that month by month.

Cattle

Revised by Ronnie Silcox and Lawton Stewart, Extension Animal Scientists
Original manuscript by Ronnie Silcox and Mark McCann, Extension Animal Scientists
UGA

April–

–General

- Keep a close watch on pasture conditions. Continue supplemental feeding until grass is plentiful.
- Fertilize permanent pastures according to soil tests if not done previously.
- Start watching for flies. Order fly control products to be ready when treatment warrants. To avoid resistance, change the class of insecticide used each year.
- Use all outside stores of hay; clean out hay storage areas for new hay.

–Spring Calving

- For calves to begin hitting the ground around January 10, bulls need to go into pastures on April 1.
- Check condition of bulls during the breeding season. Provide supplemental feed if needed.
- Be prepared to remove bulls from heifers after a 45–60 day breeding season. Spot check heifers for activity now to see if they are breeding.
- Cows need to be in moderate to good condition to rebreed. Provide supplemental feed if spring pastures are slow to grow.

–Fall Calving

- To precondition for shipment, calves should be vaccinated for respiratory diseases 45 days

Meat Goat

Steven M. Jones
Associate Professor Animal Science
University of Arkansas

April–

- Continue kidding and observe does and kids daily.
- Discontinue supplemental feeding to does as economics dictate.
- Evaluate forage conditions and inventory.
- Scours can be caused by coccidiosis, a constant but sometimes undetected threat to kids. Treat if needed. Kid starter should include a coccidiostat.
- Give the kids a special pen outside on nice days where they can enjoy the sunshine and start to nibble on a little grass.
- Outside hay feeders will reduce manure buildup in the barn.
- Clean out manure from barns and use as fertilizer.
- Light treated does for fall freshening should start cycling in heat six weeks after you turned off the timers. The heats will be short. Pen them with a buck for best results. Two bucks are more effective if you don't plan to keep purebred kids.
- Review your financial budget to review the status of expenses and expected receipts.
- Ask – Do my animals look as good as I would like? Do management practices need to be changed?

prior to shipment. Check with your veterinarian now for product recommendations so these vaccines can be ordered.
- Pregnancy check heifers 45-60 days after the end of breeding season.
- Brand or otherwise establish permanent IDs for bred heifers.

Sheep Management Schedule

Scott P. Greiner, Extension animal scientist;
Virginia Tech
Publication originally written by Steven H. Umberger, Extension Animal Scientist.

No single system of production is right for everyone. The ideal lambing season for a flock will depend on the available facilities, labor and management resources, genetics, pasture and feed resources, and the operation's marketing program. However, each system of production must emphasize those practices which enhance the overall well-being of the flock. Areas of critical importance that must be considered for every flock include internal parasite control, foot-rot control, and predator control.
In many cases, the timing of the management practice is as important as the practice itself. Therefore, every sheep farm should have, at the very least, a simple set of working pens that facilitate the handling of sheep at critical times of the year. Too often, in the absence of a working facility, important tasks are ill-timed or left undone.

Spring-

- Treat ewes and all lambs over 6 weeks old for internal parasites the day before turning onto spring pasture. Thereafter, treat lambs and ewes once every 3 to 4 weeks throughout the grazing season.
- Shear during March, April, or May if ewes were not shorn pre-lambing. Shear white face ewes first and package and market their wool separately from blackface and blackface cross ewes.
- Store wool in a clean, dry place. Do not store wool on the ground or on concrete.
- Sell cull ewes in late February, March, or early April.
- Trim and check feet, and put the flock through a foot bath prior to placing ewes on pasture.
- Move ewes nursing lambs to fresh pasture every 2 to 3 weeks. An ideal sheep pasture contains a mixture of grass and clover with an average height of 4'' to 6''.
- Restrict the grazing flock to two-thirds of the available pasture. Harvest hay from the remainder. Allow time for regrowth and graze for the rest of the year.
- Identify and retain ewe lambs from a winter lambing to be used as replacements. Breed so that they will lamb first as yearlings.
- Manage winter-born lambs (December through March) so that they are marketed in the spring prior to the season price decline that occurs heading into the summer months.

Horse Pasture Weeds

Kim Woods
NC Extension

Last spring, did you have beautiful yellow flowers covering your pastures? Although these flowers, commonly known as buttercup, are pretty to look at, they have no nutritional value and can take important nutrients from the plants you are trying to grow in your pasture. This weed, which is a winter annual, should be sprayed in late winter or early spring (late February – early March) for the best kill. So, now is a great time to scout for those weeds. With the warm temperatures this winter, you may be able to see small rosettes of this weed poking through the grass. If you wait until they are blooming to spray, you will be wasting your time and money. Also, it is important to wait until you've had 3-4 warm days (50-55 degrees) to spray. Your control will be very poor if you spray when the air temperature is too cold. It may take 2-3 years of spraying to control the weed. Many broadleaf herbicides will do a good job killing this weed. The key is to kill it before it has a chance to bloom and set seed for new plants next year. Call the Extension Office for recommendations of what and how much to spray on these weeds.

There are many different weeds that could be present in your horse pasture. They typically fall into 2 categories: broadleaf and grass weeds. Grass weed control is limited (see paragraph below). There are several options available to control broadleaf weeds - the buttercup mentioned above is just one such example of a broadleaf weed. Call your local Extension office for assistance identifying weeds and determining the best and most cost effective herbicide to use.

Due to label changes, there is now an option for controlling some annual grass weeds in perennial grass pasture. Prowl H20 has been around awhile and was labeled for use in Bermuda grass pastures and hay fields. A supplemental label is now available that allows for annual grass control in perennial cool season grasses like fescue and orchard grass. It's not a cheap herbicide so you will have to weigh whether the amount of weed present is worth the cost of the herbicide. But it is certainly an option that may be useful in some situations. It is a pre-emergent herbicide; therefore, application should be made prior to germination. Some grasses controlled include foxtails, goosegrass, shattercane, and signalgrass. Here are

Management Tools for the Equine Owner

Clint Carty
NC Extension

1. Don't graze too soon! It has been a long winter and hay supplies are dwindling but remember to wait for your pastures to reach a proper grazing height before turning horses out for long periods of time. Feeding hay a little longer come spring time can be a pain and time consuming but it will be worth it in the end. Your grasses are also trying to recover from winter and need all the help they can get to become bountiful again. Horses are hard on pastures because they have a full mouth of teeth unlike ruminants so they tend to rip grasses out of the ground at a higher rate. So, if you reseeded in the fall to have a more productive pasture for this year don't shoot yourself in the foot by allowing your horses to pull newly established grasses out of the ground because they don't have an adequate root base yet. Also, March and April are a great time to fertilize pastures, just be conscientious of temperature and weather. Consult with your local Extension Agent for further guidance.

2. To further enhance your pastures production for your animals, adopting rotational grazing practices are extremely beneficial. Rotational grazing helps grasses rest and regrow for higher yields, helps deposit manure more evenly across the area reducing parasite loads, and helps make horses graze more evenly across an area so there is less spot grazing.

3. Finally, one of the best management tools is to drag your pastures after moving horses off of an area. This helps break up the manure piles which in turn spreads out nutrients and helps reduce parasite activity. Some cheap drags can be made from a few old tires and works great to break up manure piles and not damage your forages.

some tips when using Prowl H20 in cool season grasses: 1) Temperature doesn't matter, at least not as much as what we typically think. So, February and March are good times to use this herbicide. 2) It breaks down quickly in anaerobic (no oxygen present) conditions. So, don't spray right after rain as the soil is saturated with water and there is no oxygen present in the soil. Wait for the soil to dry out and then spray. 3) Use the high rate to get a good control. This means about 4 quarts to the acre for best control. This rate drives up the cost of application. Finally, there are other herbicides with the same active ingredient but may have differing percentages. According the labels, Prowl H20 is the only pendimethalin product that is labeled for use in cool season grass pastures and hay fields. There are no harvest or grazing restrictions. Temporary crop injury can occur, and application in extremely cold temperatures (and other conditions) may make crop injury more likely or more severe.

Remember: Always read and follow the label directions prior to using any chemicals.

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