

# Timeliness

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**T**here is a fine line between eccentrics and geniuses. If you are a little ahead of your time, you're an eccentric, and if you're too late, you're a failure, but if you hit it right on the head, you're a genius.—Thomas J. Watson, Jr.

Doing things at the correct time is important in business ventures and it is equally critical in successful pasture and hay management. Most of us know someone who continues to have a succession of failures, largely because of not getting things done on time.

(1) Not getting land prepared in time for planting bermudagrass sprigs when weather conditions were favorable in April—ran into drought and got a poor stand.

(2) Failure to order parts and getting planting equipment ready to plant rye on time—stand came up late because of drought, then cold weather further delayed growth so grazing was late.

(3) Didn't get around to spraying herbicide on pasture weeds at the proper time when weeds were small—ended up getting a poor weed kill.

(4) Forgot to repair the busted hay baler at end of last year's haying season—took a week to get the parts, missed good haymaking weather and got further delayed by over a week of rain so ended up with overmature low quality hay.

(5) Failed to get a nitrate test run on some sorghum-sudan hay harvested during drought—fed the hay and killed five cows.

(6) Didn't get nitrogen fertilizer spread on tall fescue pasture until late October—missed out on good fall growing weather and so didn't get much fall grazing.

(7) Dog chewed up the packages of clover inoculum, didn't have time to go to town for more so used old soybean inoculum—red clover didn't get nodulated so growth was poor.

Some forage producers always seem to be "lucky" and get things to work out successfully while others seem to have everything go wrong. Much of the success of "lucky" forage producers is a result of prior planning and the ability to get things done when they need to be done.

Setting timetables on tasks to be done such as ordering equipment parts, repairing machinery, ordering seed, fertilizer, herbicide, land preparation, planting times, and herbicide application can assist in planning. Keeping a diary of each year's tasks can further assist in future planning. Planning ahead can keep one from operating on a crisis timetable for each item. Farming has enough unplanned crises without adding to them.

Timeliness is especially important in forage establishment. Optimum planting times are often only a few weeks to take advantage of favorable weather and soil conditions. Getting small seeded grasses and legumes planted at the proper time may affect not only stands but also subsequent production. Timeliness in fertilization and herbicide application affect forage quality and yield. Timely adjustment of pasture stocking rates in moving cattle or cross fencing to conserve hay can prevent waste and improve forage quality. Watching weather forecasts and having equipment ready to go when conditions are favorable for hay harvest can reduce nutrient losses from rain.

Timeliness and successful forage management is eliminating procrastination by setting priorities on when jobs need to be done. Timeliness will result in a good forage program and improved livestock production. Now is the time to begin.

"You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do."—Henry Ford

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