Grazing Management Strategies to Improve Efficiency and Reduce Risk

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Overview

- Improve forage use efficiency
  - Use complimentary forages
  - Decrease N needs (most from other speakers)
  - Grazing methods
- Improve nutrient cycling
  - Baseline fertility
  - Grazing methods
- Plan for fall and winter
  - Stockpile bermudagrass or tall fescue
  - Overseeding tips

Grow both warm and cool season perennials (if possible)

- Perennials are the backbone of forage systems
  - Dependable
  - Productive
  - Tolerant of abuse
- Cool season perennials can have low forage production in summer and in late fall and winter
- Warm season perennials have no production from frost to May

Use perennial legumes as companions to perennial grasses (if possible)

- Perennial legumes can be extremely useful in extending the grazing season
- Red clover is probably best option if goal is longer grazing season
  - Persist 1-2 years
- White clover also can be a good addition

Use annual grasses to complement perennials

Even within forage class, select species that fill specific production gaps

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S. Forages 3rd Ed. Ball et al., 2002
Tallisner AL., 1987
Pederson and Ball, 1991

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Forage Utilization with Various Harvest Methods

Use grazing management to maximize utilization AND flexibility

Many people think of the increased utilization from rotational stocking as a way to increase stocking density- it also can allow stockpiling or improve utilization of grasses in late summer, early fall months

Flexibility in management is rotational grazing’s biggest attribute

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Manure Distribution

Rotation Frequency

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Acres to Get Pile/yr</th>
<th>27</th>
<th>8</th>
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<td>2 day</td>
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Nutrient content of stockpiled bermudagrass
(Eatonton, GA '03-'04)

Planning for Fall:
Stockpile Forage

- Tall fescue is the classic forage for stockpiling
  - Weathers well after frost
  - Sugar content actually increases in cooler weather
  - Some evidence that toxic alkaloids also decrease in winter
- Fertility and rest is critical!
- Recipe

Stockpiling bermudagrass?

74% utilization 2.23% of BW intake

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Cow performance on stockpiled bermudagrass or hay

- Animal performance did not differ between hay and stockpiled forage.
- On average, 1786 lbs of hay fed per cow over the 70 d trial.
- 2.15 bales of forage needed for grazing.

Planning for Fall:
Overseeding bermudagrass extends grazing season

- Consider Planting Method

Summary
- Improve forage use efficiency
  - Use complimentary forages
  - Decrease N needs (most on this later)
  - Utilize rotational grazing methods
- Improve nutrient cycling
  - Consider baseline fertility
  - Utilize rotational grazing methods
- Plan for fall and winter
  - Stockpile bermudagrass or tall fescue
  - Overseeding early and clean till if possible for maximum grazing days

Consider Planting Method

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