



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
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FORAGE FACTS

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UGA Forage website now online:

We now have a forage website posted at www.georgiaforages.com. We're constructing this site as time allows, so be patient. Hopefully within the year it will develop into an effective information delivery tool. This site contains establishment information, UGA forage extension publications, Georgia Cattleman forage articles, Forage Fact newsletters and links to other forage sites. In addition, several weed control articles from Tim Murphy and insect control information are available. Within the next few months we also hope to have a slide presentation section for county agents to download for local meetings.

New forage extension publications available

Two new forage extension publications were recently released. "Forage Systems for Horses in Georgia" is a 20 page comprehensive bulletin. It is essentially a "Pastures in Georgia" -type publication for horse owners. "Novel Endophyte-Infected Tall Fescue" is a short four page circular that outlines available information on MaxQ and ArkPlus non-toxic endophyte-infected tall fescue. These new publications can be found by linking through www.georgiaforages.com and are also posted on the extension print-on-demand system.


Dormant sprigging is effective


bermudagrass establishment practice

It is possible to dig and plant sprigs in late winter before bermudagrass has broken dormancy. In fact, sprigging immediately prior to greenup holds some important advantages over later establishment dates. First, there is typically dependable rainfall and soil moisture during this time of the year. Sprigs will also contain more stored carbohydrates when they are dormant than a few weeks after greenup. This is important because carbohydrates are the “fuel” used to sprout roots and leaves for establishment. Higher carbohydrate levels mean that sprigs will be more vigorous. Early establishment also should provide a headstart on annual warm season weeds like crabgrass. Dormant sprigging certainly won't eliminate this problem, but anything that diminishes crabgrass competition is beneficial.

In early spring soil temperatures will be low, so bermudagrass will be slower to emerge. In addition, multiple late freezes can cause establishment problems, so quality sprigs with good energy reserves should be used when dormant sprigging. The benefits of sprigging early in the spring greatly outweigh the detriments, and dormant sprigging is a management practice that should be practiced more frequently. JGA

White grubs

While a big, fat white grub makes excellent fish bait, it could spell trouble for your pastures and hay fields. White grubs are the larval stage of  carab beetles and there are several types of white grubs in Georgia. The most common and the only one that can be controlled to any extent is the Green June Beetle (*Cotinis nitida*; which crawls on its back if placed on top of the soil). This type of grub tunnels up to the surface each night to feed and returns down into the soil by morning. Although these white grubs prefer to feed on decaying organic matter, occasionally they chew the tender roots of grass plants. The primary damage to pastures and hay fields is mechanical due to the tunneling activities which separates roots from soil and dries them out. Damage from white grubs appears as declining growth, bare or brown patches, trails of pulverized soil, and the economic threshold is 1 grub per square foot.

 The most likely places to find white grubs are in fields fertilized heavily with organic fertilizers (poultry litter, municipal sludge, etc), under hay bales, or cattle feeding sights. There are two periods during the year in which these larvae feed. The eggs hatch in late summer and the first instars feed until the temperatures drop to near freezing in late fall. Following the warm up around March, the larger larvae feed until late April to May, at which time the grubs

pupate and become adult green June beetles. Green June beetle grubs can be controlled by a late-afternoon application of Seven® or Lanate® if the grass is cut low. A state-wide program is being started to determine the levels of infestation from green June beetle in Georgia pastures and hay fields. An email will be sent to all county agents describing the program. If any county agents are interested in working on this program, please email Robert Morgan at RNMorgan@uga.edu.
RNM

Forage Calendar:

Bermudagrass pastures/hayfields:

Immediately prior to greenup is a great time to sprig bermudagrass (see above article).

Burning hybrid bermudagrass is also an excellent practice to reduce residue and eliminate many winter annual weeds. This should be done in a safe and controlled manner just prior to bermudagrass green up. For more information see the article written by Robert Morgan at: http://commodities.caes.uga.edu/fieldcrops/forages/GA_Cat_Arc/February02.htm.

Control annual weeds like little barley or ryegrass in dormant bermudagrass. Henbit has already begun to bloom, and is going to be difficult if not impossible to control. As long as bermudagrass has not broken dormancy, Roundup can be applied; however at this late date it is probably wise to apply a contact herbicide like paraquat

to avoid injuring bermudagrass.

Application timing is critical for good control- see the article by Tim Murphy at: <http://commodities.caes.uga.edu/fieldcrops/forages/Weedinfo/weedarts/ryegrass.htm>

Depending on the weed species, broadleaves can be safely controlled with a variety of products containing 2,4-D alone or in combination with dicamba or picloram.

Fertilize both *bermudagrass and tall fescue* for spring production. For tall fescue, 60-70 lbs N/Ac will provide excellent spring forage growth. Hybrid bermudagrass can utilize 75 lbs N/Ac. Provide adequate P and K according to soil test information.

Tall fescue pastures and hayfields:

See pasture fertilization tip above.

Spring seed red and white clovers into tall fescue. It is getting late in the spring for establishment, but dependable results can still be obtained in the more northern areas of Georgia through mid-March.

If you plan on replacing toxic tall fescue with nontoxic fescue in the fall, *do not allow fescue to set seed this spring*. Keep pasture mowed or grazed tightly during spring to prevent endophyt-infected seed addition to the seed bank.

Harvest tall fescue for hay at the late boot to soft dough stage. Harvesting at earlier maturities will decrease spring yields, but improve hay quality and hasten regrowth.

Abstract of Interest

Hill, G.M., and R.N. Gates. 2001. Spring regrowth and steer performance on Tifton 85 and Coastal bermudagrass pastures following sod-seeding with ryegrass. *Proceedings of the XIX International Grassland Congress*. Pgs. 823-824.

Effects of autumn sod-seeded ryegrass (var. Passerel) in bermudagrass pastures (var. Coastal and Tifton 85) on grazing steer performance were determined. Ryegrass was sod-seeded in three of six 2 acre pastures of each bermudagrass. Forage height was adjusted to 10cm during spring. Stocking rates were unaffected by ryegrass in Tifton 85, but they were higher ($P < .05$) for Tifton 85 than Coastal. Ryegrass increased tester steer average daily gains by 34% (.86 vs .64 kg/day; $P < .01$), and gain/ha by 26% (387 vs 306 kg/ha; $P < .05$). Higher stocking rates resulted in 22% more grazing days and 30% higher gain/ha for Tifton 85 than Coastal pastures. Ryegrass did not affect stocking rates or steer performance on Tifton 85, but it depressed both on Coastal pastures.

Bottom line:

Sodseeding ryegrass in Coastal pastures decreased summer bermudagrass stocking rates. Tifton 85 pastures that were sodseeded with ryegrass were not affected in late spring and summer months. Reason for this difference between hybrids are unclear. Perhaps differences in canopy characteristics or aggressiveness of stolons are related. JGA

