




ALFALFA IN THE SOUTH: SITE SELECTION AND ESTABLISHMENT

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Alfalfa



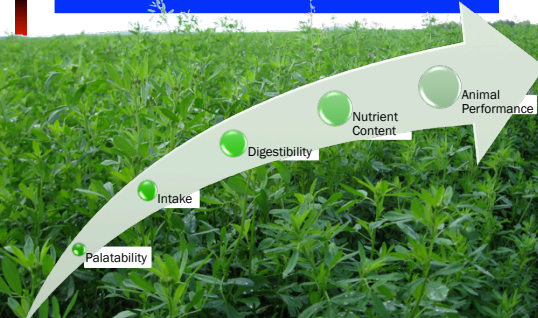
Adaptation	Well-drained soils, if soil is fertile and management is good. Best if irrigated.
Lifespan	4-7 years in LVM & Pied; 3-5 years in Coastal Plain
Yield	4-6 tons/A (dry); 5-8 tons/A (irrigated)
Soil Considerations	Soil pH \geq 6.5 (4-6 in. depth) Subsoil pH \geq 5.5 (down to 4 ft.) Well-drained, deep, and fertile
Bloat Potential	High
Uses	1) Hay, 2) Silage, 3) Grazing
Establishment	Drill: 20-25 lbs/A Broadcast: 22-25 lbs/A
Varieties	Alfagraze 600 RR (S), Bulldog 505 (S), Bulldog 805 (CP)
Comments	Very valuable (\$140-200 ⁺⁺ per ton). Highest quality forage.

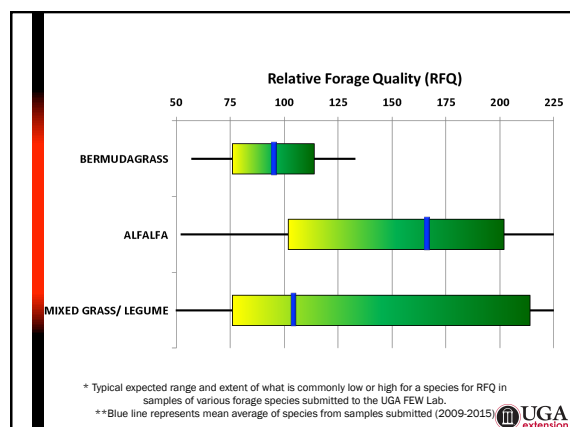
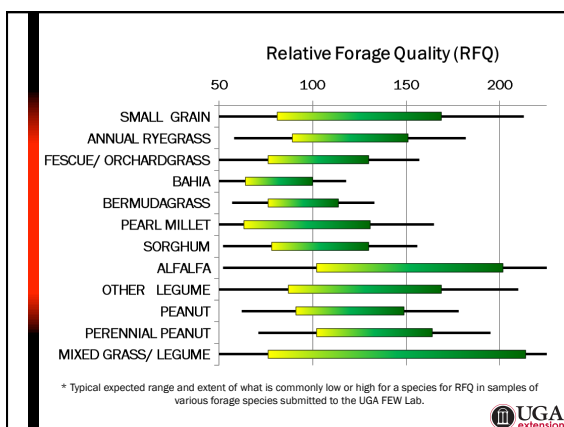
Courtesy of D. Hancock

WHAT ABOUT INTERSEEDING?



Adding Legumes to Grass Improves Forage Quality!






Forage Quality Parameters for Selected Forage Crops					
Crop	Maturity	CP	TDN	NDF	ADF
Bermudagrass	4 weeks old	10-12	52-58	33-38	63-68
	8 weeks old	6-8	45-50	40-45	70-75
Alfalfa	Bud	22-26	64-67	28-32	38-47
	Early Flower	18-22	64-64	32-36	42-50
	Mid Bloom	14-18	58-61	36-40	46-55
	Full Bloom	9-13	50-57	41-43	56-60

Source: Adapted from J.C. Henning and G.D. Lacefield, University of Kentucky



Why Interseed Alfalfa into Bermudagrass?

1. Grow your own nitrogen
2. Increase the quality of your forage (+30 or more RFQ points)
3. Makes excellent supplemental feed and/or cash hay crop
4. Growing with bermudagrass allows alfalfa to dry faster and be harvested clean
5. Prevents stem maggot damage.
6. If all else fails, you still have bermudagrass.




Courtesy of D. Hancock

A winning combination:



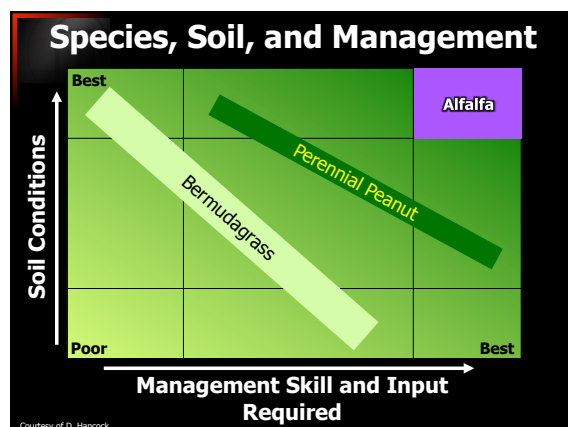



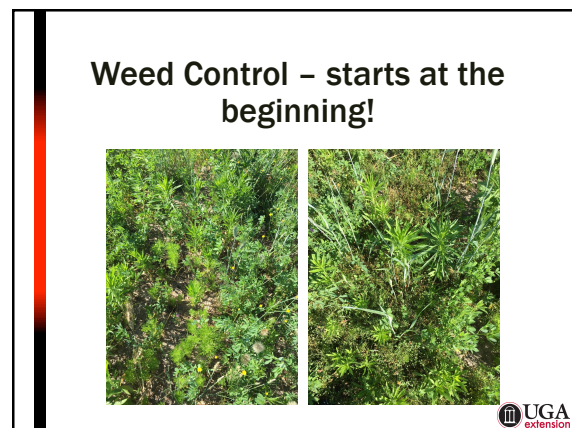
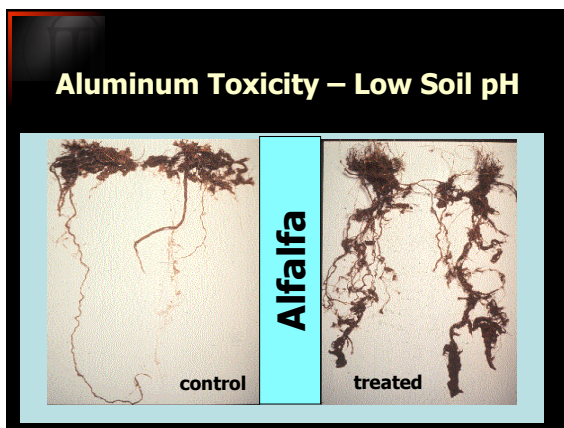
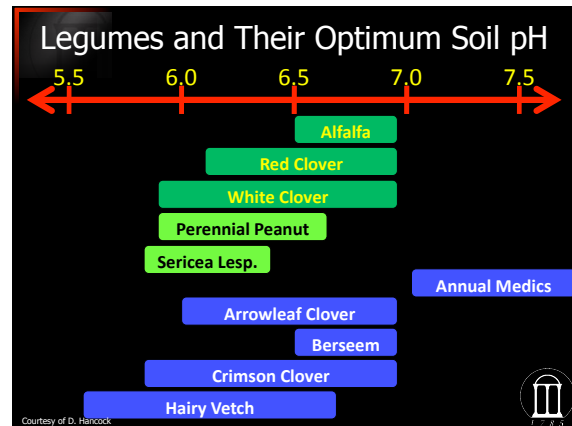
HOW TO'S AND WHAT NOT'S



Where to Start:

- Soil Test
- SOIL Test
- SOIL TEST!!
- Target pH 6.5 or greater
- Subsoil (1 ft depth) pH should be greater than 5.5
- High P and High K
- Don't forget the Micronutrients!
 - Mo and B



Manage weeds during establishment!

- Control what you can when you can!
- Determine if treatment is warranted
- If using RR technology, Glyphosate is your friend!
- If conventional establishment – there are options – however they may damage alfalfa for a period of time
- Even harder in a mix!
- After established – pre-emergent technologies are warranted!

UGA extension

Avoid Areas Treated with Residual Herbicides

- Aminopyralid (GrazonNext, Chaparral, etc.) or picloram (Grazon P+D, Surmount, Tordon, etc.) requires bioassay
 - Delay planting until at least 10-12 months after application (usually)
- Sulfonylureas (Cimarron, metsulfuron, Pastora, Outrider, etc.)
 - Delay planting by 4-12 mos.+
- Dicamba (Banvel, Clarity, Weedmaster, etc.)
 - Delay planting by 4 months+

Specimen Label
GrazonNext 1.0

Courtesy of D. Hancock

When to Plant:

- Plant at the right time of the year, when conditions are favorable!
- Recommended Fall Planting
 - Northern GA – Sept. 15 – Oct. 15
 - Southern GA – Oct. 15 – Nov. 15
- When there is plenty of soil moisture and temperatures have dropped into favorable range of planting for success!



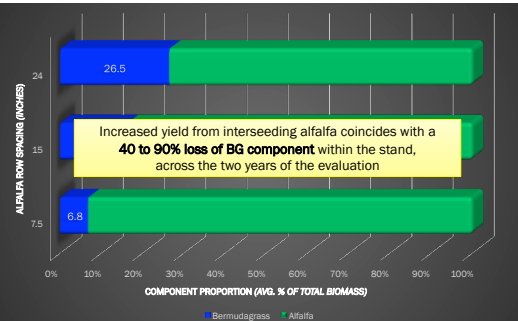
- Plant with a No-Till drill
 - **No Deeper** than ½ inch
 - 1/4th is better!



- Plant with a No-Till drill
 - **No Deeper** than ½ inch
 - 1/4th is better!
- In a suppressed sod?
 - Yes - bermudagrass
 - More of a challenge with cool season species
- Seeding Rate:
 - Drill: 20-25 lbs/A
 - Interseeding?
 - What about Row Spacing?



Percentage Bermudagrass in Mixtures at 3 different row spacing's at 2 locations in South Carolina (1987-1989)



Adapted from Stringer et al., 1994



Inoculate Legume Seed!

The population of the specific Rhizobium (Rhizobium meliloti) is likely to be very low in the soil.

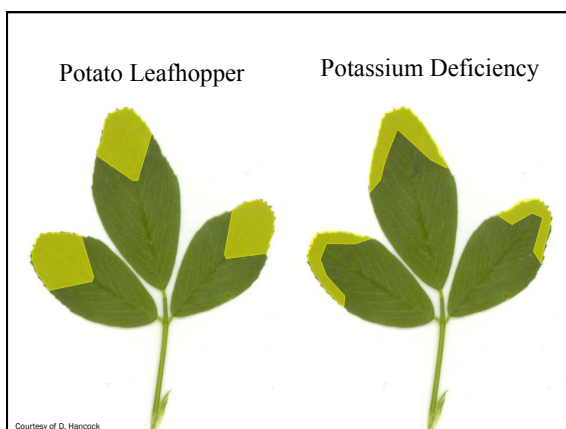
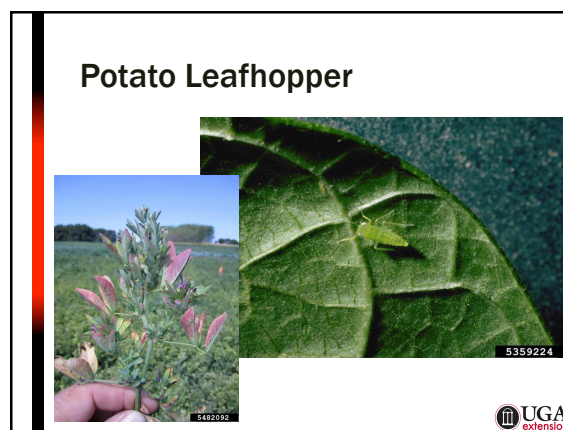
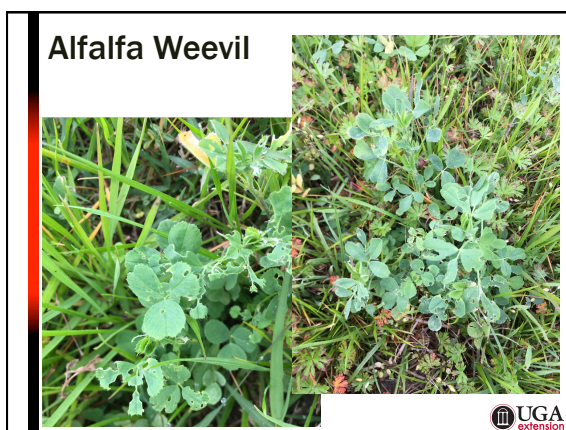
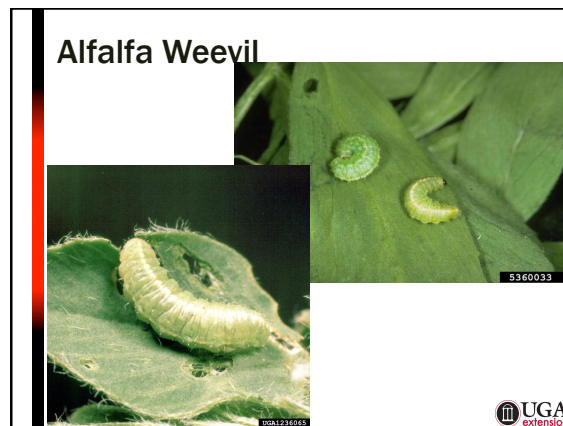
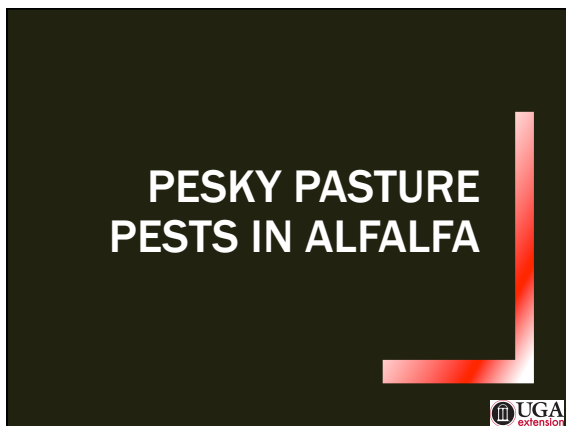
- Inoculate seed with fresh inoculant before seeding.
 - 1 bag of inoculant per bag of seed.
- Alfalfa seed often comes pre-inoculated.
 - coated with an inert material, usually lime,
 - saves time and helps to ensure inoculation
 - check expiration date

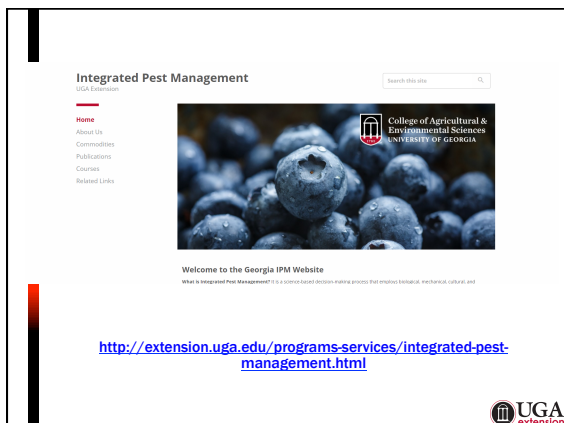


What now?

- After emergence – Spray with insecticide to control insect pests







What now?

- After emergence –
Spray with insecticide to control insect pests
- Irrigate if available
- Remember:
– When in Doubt, Scout!
- G.O.A.L.
– Get Out And Look!



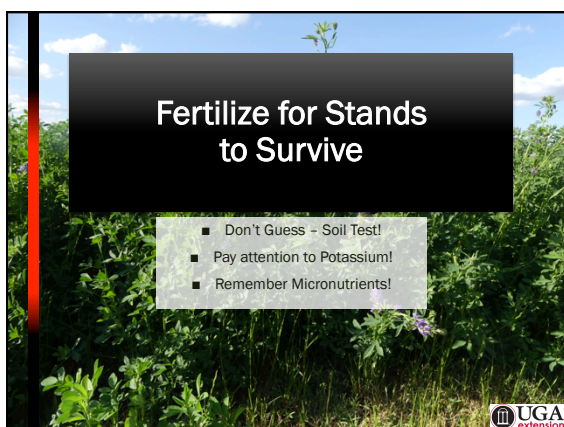


It's Here to stay or Go Away?



- Keys to maintaining Alfalfa in Bermudagrass
- Applying K Fertility as recommended
- Following K Fertility recommendations
- Fertilizing with K as recommended
- Apply B and Mo as recommended

Don't Forget K!!

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