



FORAGE FACTS

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Frost seeding

The release of persistent white clovers, wet weather and favorable beef prices have increased producer interest in improving grazing animal performance. White and red clovers are commonly “frost seeded” in the Midwestern United States. Freeze/thaw cycles in these areas of the U.S. cause the soil surface to ‘honeycomb’. This slight shrinking and swelling at the soil surface delivers seed to an excellent depth for germination and emergence. Several producers have asked if frost seeding is an option in Georgia. Broadcasting legume seed in late winter and early spring in the Georgia is an excellent practice for establishing clovers. However, except for Upper Piedmont and Mountain areas, this success is normally not the result of freeze-thaw cycles. Sandy soils and mild temperatures in the Lower Piedmont and Coastal Plain do not allow “honeycombing”. Broadcast seeding is most successful in Georgia when pastures are dragged or stocked heavily to incorporate seed into the soil following broadcasting. Broadcast winter annual clovers like arrowleaf or crimson onto bermudagrass in fall months. Broadcast white or red clovers into existing tall fescue in winter months. This method is most effective when white and red clover are broadcast from late January to early March. Increase seeding rates by about 20-

25% when using this technique to offset decreased seed/soil contact.

Replacing toxic tall fescue with “friendly” endophyte-infected tall fescue:

Acreage of nontoxic endophyte-infected tall fescue is increasing in the state. It is critical to eradicate existing toxic tall fescue before “friendly” endophyte-infected varieties like MaxQ are established. In addition, toxic tall fescue should NOT be allowed to produce viable seed in the spring prior to nontoxic tall fescue establishment. Begin planning now to prevent seedhead production and kill existing stands using herbicide and/or tillage. We are still currently recommending a spray-smother-spray approach for eradicating toxic tall fescue. This method involves a spring application of Roundup or paraquat prior to tall fescue seed production. The spring herbicide application is followed by a summer smother crop of pearl millet. Escape toxic tall fescue plants should be sprayed again prior to fall planting with glyphosate or paraquat to create a “clean” field. We are investigating more rapid and inexpensive methods of renovation, but currently do not have enough data to recommend an alternative. For more information on “friendly” endophyte tall fescue varieties visit www.georgiaforages.com and go to

the Extension publications section. Additional information and the latest persistence results can also be obtained at your local county extension office.

Upcoming regional forage conferences:

UGA Grazing School in Tifton.

The October 2003 Grazing School in Athens was a great success! Because of the high producer interest level, we are planning another grazing school for south Georgia beef, equine and goat producers. The conference will be held at the Rural Development Center in early April and will focus on improving grazing management of forage systems typical of the Coastal Plain and Flatwoods. Please check the forage extension website

(www.georgiaforages.com) regularly for more information. As soon as a date and agenda are available information and registration forms will be posted on the site. Space will again be limited to 35 participants to encourage interaction among instructors and producers. A waiting list of several producers already exists, so please register early if you plan to attend.

Southern Forages Workshop

Producers interested in learning how to grow southern forages successfully should plan to attend the Southern Forages Workshop being held in Chattanooga, TN at the historical Holiday Inn Choo Choo on Saturday, February 7, 2004. Guest speakers include the authors of the renowned book, Southern Forages, Dr. Don Ball, Auburn University; Dr. Garry Lacefield, University of Kentucky; and Dr. Carl Hoveland, University of Georgia. Other program guests include Dr. John Andrae and Dr. Gary Bates, Extension Forage Specialists at the University of Georgia and University of Tennessee, respectively. The one day program will touch on all phases of forage production and management. Early registration is encouraged. For additional information, contact: Conrad Lavender, Southern Agribusiness Services, LLC. Email

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www.southernagribusiness.com

2004 South Carolina AgExpo Forage Program

There will be a 1 ½ hour forage session held again this year at the South Carolina AgExpo on the morning of February 10, 2004. The AgExpo will be

held in Columbia, SC. For more information, contact your local South Carolina Extension Agent.

2004 American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Meeting.

The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council (VFGC) and Virginia Tech invite you to join us in historic and scenic Virginia for the 2004 Conference of the American Forage and Grassland Council on June 12-16, 2004 at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center in Roanoke, Virginia. The conference includes joint sessions of the Southern Pasture and Forage Improvement Conference (SPFIC) and the Mid-Atlantic Dairy Grazing Conference. Forage producers, industry representatives, scientists, educators, and anyone else interested in sharing information about forage agriculture would find the conference helpful. The theme of this year's conference is "Farmers, Forages and the Future".



In many states such as Virginia, forages comprise the majority of agricultural land use. This year we will tour innovative farms along the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, including a tour of the grazing research being conducted on the historic Cyrus McCormick Farm. We'll continue the next day with the popular and informative Producer Day with industry exhibits and demonstrations, followed by a Taste of Virginia dinner and evening activities. The following day is Scientific Day, featuring the Emerging Scientists Competition and paper and poster presentations from leading forage producers and researchers. The AFGC Awards Banquet will be held that evening, and then the conference concludes with the AFGC Board meeting the next morning.

There will also be a Spouses/Companions Program available.



Note: The AFGC

national conference is a producer friendly forage meeting and should be considered by those interested in forage production. For an example of the presentation format, see the abstract below. More information on the American Forage and Grassland Council can be found at www.afgc.org. Specific information about the conference will be posted at www.conted.vt.edu/afgc/ We are in the early stages of forming a Georgia Affiliate of the American Forage and Grassland Council. If you are interested in participating in this process, please let us know.

Abstract of Interest:

Stocking rate and grazing management impact on stocker calves grazing bermudagrass/winter annual pasture. K.A. Cassida, C.B. Stewart, P.A. Beck, and S.A. Gunther. 2003 Proceedings American Forage and Grassland Council Vol 12 Lafayette, LA.

Rotational grazing systems have attracted attention for perceived benefits to cattle performance, but these benefits have proven elusive to quantify. Therefore, we evaluated the relationship between continuous and rotational stocking systems over a range of possible stocking rates (2,3, or 4 stocker calves per acre). Winter annual forages (wheat/annual ryegrass/crimson clover/berseem clover) were over seeded onto common bermudagrass and calves grazed pastures from mid-February through late September in 1999-2001. At low stocking rates, calf average daily gain and total calf gain/acre were better for the continuous than for the rotational system. At high stocking rates, the advantage reversed and calves performed better on the rotational system. In general, calves performed better when pastures contained some winter annual and most gain occurred prior to the time of bermudagrass dominance. Rotational stocking did not improve calf performance during the bermudagrass period. More hay was harvested and less was fed on rotational systems than on continuous systems. The continuous system fed more hay than was harvested when stocked at the medium and high rates. Under rotational stocking, control of the forage supply was better than under continuous stocking at all stocking rate levels, but benefits to animal performance under rotation were only seen at the highest stocking rate. Best use of rotational stocking systems is dependent on selection of optimum stocking rates.