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Plan Now for Winter Grazing

Adequate winter pastures reduce livestock feed costs and increase weight gains of beef cattle and milk production of dairy herds. By making plans now to seed the proper pasture crops, grazing can be provided during most, if not all, of the winter months.

The winter pasture program should be based upon the use of small grains, winter legumes, and cool-season grasses. Research has shown that by midwinter the cured summer grasses are very deficient in protein. Analyses of various grasses in January at the Denton Agricultural Experiment Station placed the protein content of Little Bluestem at 2.7 percent, K. R. Bluestem at 3.3, Bermuda at 5.0, and Buffalo at 6.0, compared with 12.3 percent for Kentucky fescue and 12.5 for Western wheat grass.

While exact recommendations as to varieties, rates and time of seeding, fertilizer needs, and cultural practices for the establishment of winter pastures vary throughout the Southwest, some general information can be given that should be helpful in making plans for winter grazing.

Small Grains

All of the small grains can be used for winter pasture. They are particularly important to the Southwest because the seed is readily available, most farmers are familiar with planting methods, no special equipment is required, and they are productive on a wide variety of soils. Planting time ranges from September to November, depending upon the area and moisture conditions.

Oats, one of the most common grains used in central and eastern areas of the Southwest, should be sown at the rate of about 2 or 3

bushels per acre except in parts of northern Louisiana, where as much as 8 bushels per acre may be recommended. Wheat, the major pasture grain in western sections, can be sown at rates ranging from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 bushels per acre. Winter barley, either alone or with vetch, makes a very desirable pasture and is usually ready to graze a week or two earlier than other grains. The recommended rate of seeding per acre is from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 bushels of barley and about 10 pounds of vetch.

Abruzzi or Balboa rye provides a very good winter pasture and, although somewhat less productive in early fall, is generally more productive during the mid- and late-winter months. It should be sown at the rate of about 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ bushels per acre, although as much as 2 bushels are recommended in sandy areas, where soil blowing is a hazard.

Winter Legumes

Adapted, inoculated, and properly fertilized winter legumes are highly productive and should be included in the winter pasture program. Planting should be done between September 15 and November 15.

In selecting the legume to be used, farmers should be governed by the success or failure of the variety in their community, availability of seed, and the soil and moisture conditions of the area. Suggested winter legumes include:

Hairy vetch—Plant about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep at the rate of 20 pounds per acre if broadcast or 10 to 15 pounds if drilled with small grains.

Dixie crimson clover—Use 10 to 15 pounds per acre alone and 5 to 10 pounds per acre with a small grain. Plant $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch deep.

Black medic—This relatively new clover has given excellent results in certain areas and is particularly good for use in pasture mixtures. Planting rate is 10 to 15 pounds per acre in pasture mixtures or 15 to 20 pounds per acre if seeded alone.

Button clover—This is also relatively new to the Southwest and has given excellent results in many communities. From 15 to 20 pounds of scarified seed (seed with the outer hull removed) should be sown per acre.

Cool-season Grasses

Experiment stations throughout the Southwest have tested hundreds of cool-season grasses and are still searching for more productive strains and better cultural and management methods. To date, the fescues have proved to be the most desirable. Of these, Alta 144 and Kentucky 31 are probably the best adapted. They should be seeded between mid-August and mid-October at the following rates per acre: 3 to 5 pounds in 3-foot rows, 5 to 10 pounds in 2-foot rows, 10 to 15 pounds if broadcast, or 5 to 10 pounds if seeded with a legume.

Harding grass has given good results at the Texas Experiment Station at Denton, and test plantings of adapted strains of Brome and orchard grass have proved satisfactory in other sections. Dallis grass in combination with White clover and lespedeza has given good results in the coastal area.

In the seeding of these grasses, it is important that a firm seed bed, relatively free from weeds, be prepared and the seed drilled and covered lightly, usually not deeper than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch. The tiny seeds are not able to push their way to the surface if germination occurs much deeper than 1 inch.

These grasses usually provide some pasture by December but should be grazed lightly the first season so the plant can build up sufficient root stock to survive the following summer. Heavy grazing is generally possible during the second and subsequent seasons.

Fertilization

All winter pastures will benefit from proper fertilization. The kinds and amounts of ferti-

lizer to be used vary widely, and local recommendations should be followed. In general, from 200 to 400 pounds of a complete fertilizer (one containing nitrogen, phosphate, and potash) applied at the time of seeding will be profitable in the humid areas of the Southwest. Additional topdressing with nitrogen in the spring is sometimes recommended.

Irish Potatoes for Fall

LaSalle, LaSoda, and DeSoto varieties of Irish potatoes are recommended for the fall crop in Louisiana. These varieties generally outyield and are of somewhat superior quality to the Triumph, the standard variety for fall planting in most parts of the State.

The LaSoda is particularly well adapted to shipping and commands a premium on most markets. The plants set a crop relatively early and are somewhat resistant to mosaic disease. The LaSalle variety is excellent for home use and local markets.

To avoid a poor stand in the fall crop, growers should make certain that the seed has had a sufficient "rest period." This period is that time after harvest during which the seed will not sprout, regardless of temperature or other growing conditions, and is from 60 to 100 days for most varieties.

Planting should be done about mid-August in northern Louisiana and about September 1 in the southern sections. Use large seed pieces and plant about 12 inches apart in the row and from 3 to 5 inches deep. Liberal applications of commercial fertilizer will pay big dividends. On light soils a 6-8-8 fertilizer applied at the rate of 600 to 1,000 pounds per acre is recommended. On heavy soils similar amounts of either a 5-10-5 or 4-12-4 should be used.

Dairy Cows Need Water

It is common knowledge that dairy cows need adequate water for maximum milk production, but the urgency of this need frequently is not realized. Louisiana State University specialists point out that, with an average ration, about 10 pounds, or more than

1 gallon, of water are required for every pound of dry matter consumed. If insufficient water is provided, the cow usually eats less feed in order to keep her water and feed supply in balance. If forced to restrict her feed and water intake, milk production will be decreased.

Frequent watering is as essential as the quantity of water available. If forced to walk a great distance in the hot sun for water, or if watered only once or twice a day, cows will not consume sufficient water for maximum production.

Leafy, Green Alfalfa Hay Best

Alfalfa hay that contains a large percentage of leaves and is bright green in color is the most valuable, according to C. L. Canode, Oklahoma A. & M. College agronomist. Leafiness is an indication of a relatively high protein content, and green color, the presence of Vitamin A. Stemmy, brown alfalfa hay is usually very low in feeding value.

In order to produce alfalfa hay with these desirable properties, the crop should be cut when the plants are one-tenth to one-fourth in bloom and the hay handled when it is in a tough or slightly tough condition. Overdrying results in shattering of leaves and loss of color.

Feed Value of Citrus Molasses

Citrus molasses, a by-product of canning hearts and juices of citrus fruits, is about equal to corn molasses and about 95 percent as efficient as ground milo for fattening beef calves, according to tests by Texas A. & M. College.

In these tests three lots of beef calves averaging about 460 pounds were used. The ration for the check lot consisted of cottonseed meal, ground milo, Atlas silage, and prairie and alfalfa hay. Four pounds of citrus molasses were substituted for 4 pounds of ground milo in lot No. 2, and 4 pounds of corn molasses were substituted in the ration of lot 3. The calves were kept on feed for 140 days, beginning November 10, 1949.

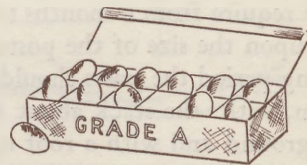
Total gain of about 270 pounds per steer and average daily gain of 1.9 pounds during the period were about the same for the three lots. Steers in each of the lots consumed about the same amount of feed, although the calves fed molasses cleaned up their feed sooner and refused feed less frequently.

On the basis of prices prevailing during the feeding period, the feed cost for 140 days was \$61.73 per steer for the lot receiving no molasses, \$52.89 for the lot receiving corn molasses, and \$52.51 for the steers receiving citrus molasses. While the first lot sold for nearly 50 cents per hundred pounds more than the others, the profit per steer was about \$5.00 less because of the higher feed costs.

On the basis of feed required per hundred pounds of gain, the two types of molasses were worth about the same, or \$44 per ton, with ground milo worth \$48 per ton.

Quality Eggs Pay Off

Quality eggs frequently bring a premium of 5 or more cents per dozen when sold on a graded basis, and the egg grading program sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture and state agricultural colleges is placing this method of selling within the reach of more and more farmers. Production of top-quality eggs is thus becoming increasingly important in obtaining highest profits in the poultry business.



Temperature and humidity are the two most important factors governing the quality of eggs, according to F. Z. Beanblossom, extension poultry marketing specialist of Texas A. & M. College. In order to maintain quality, eggs should be cooled as quickly as possible after laying to a temperature of about 65 degrees Fahrenheit and held in a room where the humidity is generally not lower than 75 percent.

The importance of prompt cooling is shown by the fact that eggs held at a temperature of 99.6 degrees F. drop to "B grade" in 3 days or less, while those held at 65 degrees F. usually maintain quality for more than a week.

Mr. Beanblossom points out that in order to facilitate cooling, eggs should be spread out on a wire tray or left in a wire basket for about 5 or 6 hours after gathering. Eggs handled in this manner will cool in from 3 to 5 hours, but if placed in a solid pail or an egg case, 12 to 20 hours will be required for cooling.

Treated Fence Posts Last Longer

Chemically treated fence posts of pine, oak, and elm usually last from 10 to 15 years longer than untreated posts, according to C. W. Simmons, extension forester of Texas A. & M. College. The cost of treating usually is about 30 cents per post.

Pentachlorophenol (usually called "penta") diluted with fuel oil to a 5-percent solution has been used successfully for treating posts from the above named tree species. The chemical holds its strength well and does not leach or wash out of the wood.

Posts to be treated should be seasoned until they take on a gray color. For pines this will require from 5 to 10 months, while oak and elm usually require from 6 months to 2 years, depending upon the size of the posts. During the seasoning period the posts should be piled crib fashion, with the stack about 18 inches above the ground and with a roof or a shade tree to keep off the sun.

September is the best month for the treating operation, although it can be done any time from June to October, according to Mr. Simmons. Posts should be completely submerged in the solution for about 2 days—or longer if they are larger than 4 inches in diameter. If the posts are placed in an upright position during treatment, they should be kept butt end down; and, if placed horizon-

tally, the butt or ground end should be treated an additional 12 to 15 hours. Split oak posts need to be treated only on the ground end. About 1 gallon of solution will be required for each post treated.

A tank suitable for treating posts up to 8 feet in length can be constructed by welding together three 50-gallon oil drums.

Control of Bagworms

Bagworms are causing considerable damage to evergreens in forests and in shrubbery in Oklahoma and Texas. Their presence can be detected by the small cone-shaped, grayish brown bags which they weave with silk and bits of leaves and twigs and attach to the branches of the trees or shrubs. Because the color of these cones is similar to that of the surrounding branches, it is frequently difficult to see them without careful inspection.

Spraying with a lead arsenate solution is recommended for control by G. R. Durrell, Oklahoma A. & M. College forester. Most effective control is gained when spray is applied early in the spring at the time the bags first appear. When mixing and applying the spray solution, manufacturer's instructions should be followed carefully.

On small trees or shrubbery, bagworms also can be controlled by pulling the bags from the limbs and burning them. All bags must be removed, as a single bag left on the tree can result in heavy infestation the following year.

Announcements

August 31—South Texas Brahman Auction, Alice, Texas.

September 11-16—Texas Aberdeen-Angus Show, Tyler, Texas.

October 7-22—State Fair of Texas, Dallas.

October 13-20—All American Jersey Show and Junior Jersey Exposition, State Fair of Texas, Dallas.