

Arkansas Bermuda Break Out - Saturday, March 2

BENTONVILLE, ARK.

Bermudagrass, even with its drought-tolerant reputation, took a hit across Arkansas last year, struggling to grow weak stands and provide low yields, while suffering more weed encroachment than ranchers find to be healthy.

It's a hard fall for a crop that has provided national championships to Arkansas growers in 12 straight years and on which ranchers depend for the cattle that are their livelihood.

"Last year's drought came on the heels of the 2011 drought and the abnormally dry spring in 2012 prevented bermuda from starting, much less finishing the year," said Robert Seay, Benton County Extension Agent, for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. "As a result, hay producers couldn't fill orders, grazers sold animals and more out-of-state hay was brought into NW Arkansas than most old-timers can remember.

"An unfortunate start to the 2013 season is that producers are dealing with multiple uncer-

tainties in regards to soil moisture, fertilizer and fuel costs, weed control and an unpredictable hay market," he said.

The good news is that "bermudagrass is the king of recovery," Seay said.

Capitalizing on bermudagrass' ability to bounce back is the focus of a program set for Saturday, March 2, at the Benton County Fairgrounds Auditorium located on Hwy. 12 at Vaughn, Ark. The program opens at 9:30 a.m. with registration and ends at 2:30 p.m.

The program covers:

- Timely and targeted weed control;
- Nitrogen and Potassium requirements and applications;
- Establishing seeded Bermuda varieties, and;
- Seasonal practices necessary to achieve stand recovery, yield and quality of hay or pasture.

A sponsor-supported program and noon meal will offered at no cost to producers who register by Feb. 28 by calling 479-271-1060, or via email at Rseay@uaex.edu. Δ