

Should Cattle Producers Stockpile Fescue This Year?

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Should cattle producers consider stockpiling fescue this fall? If it appears that there will be enough moisture to sustain growth, then the answer is definitely yes.

The bigger question may be how many acres should be set aside for stockpiling. Producers should inventory their hay supplies to determine how much additional feed will be needed. Short hay supplies may indicate the need for extra acreage of stockpiled fescue or fewer numbers of animals.

Stockpiling fescue is a relatively simple process. Step one is to closely graze the field to

be stockpiled. This step should be completed by mid-August so the fescue plants can regrow. Next, the fields should be fertilized with 60 units of nitrogen per acre. The optimum time to fertilize is mid-August to the first of September. After fertilization, keep the cattle off the field until the first frost or later.

Make plans to efficiently utilize the stockpiled fescue. Use temporary electric fences to allow animals only a limited amount of the forage at one time. Make the animals consume the available forage before moving them into another area. The concept is to minimize the amount of forage wasted. Allowing animals free access to all of the fescue will allow trampling of quality forage. (See the accompanying article by Dr. Gary Bates on page 13. Δ

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