

Stockpiling Pastures An Option For Emergency Grazing

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

Scattered rainfall in the last two weeks is dangling the possibility of forage production into the fall and winter using a technique called stockpiling, said John Jennings, professor-forage for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture.

Many producers get a final cutting of hay in October and begin feeding in November.

“Stockpiling is similar to managing for a last cutting of hay, but is managed for livestock grazing to reduce harvest cost,” he said. “Using the stockpiling program, cattle graze the forage through fall and winter.”

With bermudagrass greening in some areas, stockpiled bermuda becomes a viable option for fall grazing. Jennings said fertilizer should be applied by mid-August in north Arkansas and by late August in south Arkansas for the best growth potential.

“Fertilizer can be applied even during summer heat of August and produce good forage return,” he said, adding the warning that “the potential for growing stockpiled fescue is still unknown due to severe drought stress.

“Fields should be observed closely in late August or early September,” Jennings said. “If the

grass is greening up by that time then fertilizing in early September should be considered.”

Stockpiled fescue also makes excellent winter pasture, he said.

“The growth potential of stockpiled forage is usually 2,000-3,000 pounds of dry matter per acre,” he said. The recommended fertilizer rate for fescue is 50-60 pounds per acre of nitrogen to match that yield potential. Producers should add phosphorus and potash fertilizer according to soil test.

Jennings said stockpiling has been a key practice for achieving over 300 days of grazing for the past four years at the Livestock and Forestry Research Station at Batesville. For more information on stockpiling forages for fall and winter grazing ask for FSA 3133 “Grazing Stockpiled Forages to Reduce Hay Feeding in Fall and Winter” at your county Extension office or download from the web at

www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-3133.pdf.

For more information about the 300 Days Grazing program, see www.aragriculture.org/forage_pasture/grazing_program/grazing_program_booklet.pdf. Δ



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