



## Field Notes for The Week Of 10-2-2022

### Matching The Forage for Your Goal

October is officially here, and the dry and cool weather continues. This has been one of the more normal (if there is such a thing) fall weather patterns that southern Ohio has seen for a while with cool dry days and north to northwestern winds. This has allowed some much-needed field work to get done across the county. From making the last cutting of hay to planting winter wheat, there has been a lot accomplished in the last few weeks. Corn silage harvest has just about wrapped up and mainly due to mother nature wrapping it up as corn loses its moisture at a rapid pace, some producers have started corn and soybean harvest and yield reports are coming in as average but not quite as good as expected. Soybean yields have come in at the 55-65 bu/ac average with some high yields around 72bu/ac. Corn yields so far have been very variable with yield reports as high as 240 to as low as 150bu/ac, one local producer told me that he is expecting an average around 170 for the whole crop. Many of the soybeans are still hanging on to the green stems but the grain is getting drier each day making marketing decisions a challenge. On the livestock side of things there has been no slack in the work. This past week I was able to instruct 18 lucky producers on how to artificially inseminate beef cattle. There was discussion on the importance of tools of the trade, breeding schedules, body condition scoring, reading expected progeny differences (EPD), and choosing the correct semen for your herd. One other discussion was nutrition and key role it plays in cattle reproduction and performance. Most of the county beef production sector consists of the traditional cow/calf operation where mature cows are kept on average 10-12 years and produce a calf once a year (I HOPE) and the calf is weaned at 4-5 months of age and then marketed. Most producers depend on pasture and storage forages for their primary ration, some might choose to supplement with grain during peak lactation.

Forages play a key role in nutrition, and it is important to match the correct forage for the growth stage and growth stage of the animal. It is important to get forages tested to know values such as protein % Total Digestibility Nutrients (energy level) Digestible fiber, acid detergent and neutral detergent fibers. Cattle have four critical stages of nutritional requirements. They are:

- Stage 1- Calving or breeding stage or 82 days - this is when the nutritional requirements are at the highest. 60 days after calving is when milk production will peak. The cow is maintaining a calf while getting in the process of getting bred and producing a calf for the next season.
- Stage 2 – Breeding to weaning - this is when nutrition requirements are lower as the calves are weaned, intake lowers and requirement for energy decreases.
- Stage 3- weaning to 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester - this is when lower quality forage can be utilized due to lower nutritional requirements required by the cow.
- Stage 4- late trimester - this stage is roughly 50 days before calving and quality forage should be introduced into the diet, but high energy forages should be held at minimum to maintain a good average weight and size of developing calf.

