



Field Notes for The Week Of

7-25-2022

Sowing Spring Oats in Summer?

It is hard to believe but the end of July is here, and August is just a week away. As a child I dreaded seeing the end of July because I knew school was on the way and burley harvest would soon arrive! It is funny how things change as you grow older, now I love the month of August and as a burley producer myself I look forward to putting in a good crop. This week I was able to visit and speak with a couple of burley and wrapper tobacco producers across the county. The crop looks very good, with good average size leaves, free of fungus and insect damage. I did see some cases of Angular Leaf Spot and some horn worm damage, but very minimal. Many of the producers are topping and will begin harvest and housing very soon. Last week had very minimal rainfall across the county but the humidity levels were still high enough to keep some second and third cutting hay from being made. With that said I did take note of some Sudan grass haylage being made and even some dry grass hay being made. Second round of herbicide and fungicide applications to soybeans and soon areal applications of cover crops will be made over standing corn. I made one field call to look at damage to soybeans that turned out to be ground hog feeding. Ground hogs can do extensive damage to young soybeans, all the way up to the R3 growth stage or beginning pod, when soybean leaves begin to develop for hair then feeding will decline. I reviewed a few hay forage quality samples this week from both first and second cutting legume/ grass mixed hay, quality looked to be average and with a relatively good feed score.

So, as we enter the true dog days of summer, livestock producers are facing slow growth in pastures and a mixed bag of results on both quality and quantity of hay produced thus far. With some areas of the county receiving less rain in the first half of July, second cutting might not happen. Now is the time to take inventory of hay supply and make sure we have enough forage to last through winter. If you think you might be short on stored forages, there is still time to plant some forages that can be harvested later this fall. One of the more economical and fast-growing forage choices is Spring Oats, yes spring Oats can be planted during the summer and research has shown that depending on soil fertility, precipitation, and quality of seed yields between 1.5-2 dry matter tons per acre can be realized. Planting Oats between July 15th and August 15 can be harvested 50-60 days after. Applying 46 pounds/acre of nitrogen can help boost yields and increase quality. Total digestible nutrient levels of oats can be as high as 65% and crude protein levels can be between 15-18%. Harvest can be done either as dry or silage, if you do choose to make oats as dry hay allow for at least 4-5 days of dry weather.

