

# Weekly Article

5-17-2021

## Time to Start Planting Warm Season Annuals

Hello, my Name is Richard Purdin with OSU Extension, Ag and Natural Resource Educator and Community Development Educator for Adams County. I hope to better inform local producers and the public of the latest news in the world of agriculture. The last 10 days have been fantastic for local producers to get out and plant their crops and harvest their hay. With daytime highs reaching the upper 80's and even 90°, the soils have dried out nicely to allow for field work. With the high temps, the soils have warmed up considerably in the last 10 days, allowing for planted crops to germinate and emerge at a rapid pace. With these warming temperatures it is time to start thinking about planting warm season annuals. Warm season annual grasses such as Sudan grass, and sorghum crosses establish well in warm soils. In this article I wanted to discuss your different options, benefits, and challenges to raising warm season annuals for livestock feed.

1. **What are your options** -Sudan grass, Sorghum x Sudan, Teff grass, Grain sorghum, pearl millet, foxtail millet, forage crabgrass, and CORN.
2. **Why plant Summer Annuals?** – Summer annuals help fill in the gap of forage growth during the hot dry periods of summer. Cool season forages slow down in growth and go into a state of dormancy often referred to as the summer slump season. Summer annuals have high energy content and very palatable to livestock, for dairy producers this can mean higher yields on milk production and better grades and milk scores.
3. **When to plant-** Summer annuals grow best when the soil has reached 65°. Harvest can take place as short as 45 days after planting. Summer annuals like Sudan and Sorghum crosses can be harvested multiple times a year.
4. **Multiple uses-** Summer annual forages have a broad range of uses from hay, silage, and grazed. It is important to note that most of these forages have high moisture contents making it a challenge to cure for dry hay produce, be ready to make at high moisture.
5. **Avoid over fertilizing-** There is a thought that to get more yield more nitrogen should be applied. This can become an issue during the summer, plants will uptake and deposit excess nitrogen in the lower portions of the plant as a survival mode during droughty periods. This can create issues with nitrate toxicity.
6. **Be prepared to stop grazing or harvest before the first frost.** Frost or freezes make certain warm season annuals produce a high level of cyanide content creating prussic acid poisoning in ruminant livestock.

Some other details to go over:

- USDA FSA will open a sign-up period for CFAP #2 Assistance program for Livestock, row crop, and specialty crop producers effected by the Coronavirus pandemic. Call (937) 544 -2033 for assistance.
- May is Beef Month remember to Eat some Beef and then thank the cattle producers who work hard everyday to produce a healthy and safe product for you and your family to consume!
- July 15<sup>th</sup> is the set deadline to report acreage planted to spring crops such as corn, soybeans, oats, alfalfa, Tomatoes, Potatoes and more. Contact the FSA Office to report once crops are planted.

From the field

- Soil Temperatures around 65 °F
- Corn and soybean planting progressing 70% corn 50% beans.
- Dry Hay being made, sound like yield is higher than last season.
- First cutting of Alfalfa taking place.
- Winter Wheat starting to flower- good time for head scab scouting and control.
- Tall Fescue, Orchard grass and other cool season grasses are fully headed (quality is degrading fast)
- Scout for flea beetle damage on emerged crops non-gmo corn or sweet corn have greater effects from damage.
- Start scouting for Water hemp and Palmer Amaranth
- Consider clipping pastures with heavy Tall fescue populations.
- Tobacco has started to be transplanted.