

Weekly Article

8-22-2022

Fall Pasture Management Tips

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. August continues to fly, as I look at my calendar it is hard to believe that September is almost here and before you know it combines will be hitting the field. For many producers late August and early September is considered a slow time and for some producers this is a popular time to take time away from the farm before fall harvest season begins. I encourage you not to get lax on your management. Late summer is a critical time for production on both the livestock and row crop enterprises. This past weekend much of the county received rain and reports of 1.5 inches to almost 3 inches in certain areas. 2022 has seen its fair share of precipitation and that is definitely showing in much of our crops both good and bad! The good parts of having wet growing seasons are that crops will utilize all the water that they can to produce as much seed as possible. But too much rain can cause stresses that are often overlooked or maybe even forgot about including shallow rooted crops, higher disease infections, luxury consumption of nutrients such as potassium in soybeans, and loss of water-soluble nutrients such as nitrogen. All of these factors can have hidden consequences that can go unnoticed until harvest time occurs. This past week was a busy week for many producers and a busy one for scouting row crops. Much of the corn is maturing rapidly and silage harvest will be occurring very soon. I have noticed much of the corn showing nitrogen loss and Anthracnose that cause late season leaf blight and stalk rot, plants will also show top kill (when plants turn brown from the top down). I recommend staying diligent in inspecting stalk quality going into harvest. The next big issue that has been occurring is sudden death syndrome in the soybean crop. Symptoms of this disease show up late in the season, but the infection from a pathogen happened early in growing season when soils are cooler and wet. Alfalfa is also showing stress of the wetter/humid conditions and I have seen more and more cases of summer blight and rust on orchard grass and tall fescue. Pastures continue to grow very well and in fact livestock are actually craving forage with higher dry matter and fiber!

Speaking of pasture, late summer and early fall is the prime time to prepare pastures for winter and next spring. Often pasture management practices are forgotten at the end of the grazing season, but I would argue that this is the most critical time of year for proper pasture management and improvement. Here is a sample to-do list for your pasture management practices this fall.

- ✓ Soil sample- Time and time again I recommend conducting a soil test first before doing any other step or spending any additional money on your pastures. Fall is a great time of year to test soil and see exactly what nutrients you have available in the soil and your soil acidity or alkalinity level is.
- ✓ Weed control – while you are waiting for soil sample results to come in the mail take time to control weeds. Late summer and early fall are a great time to control perennial and some annual weeds in the pasture. My target weeds for late summer control are Canada thistle, common cocklebur, common burdock, horse nettle and late emerging

pigweeds. Chemical or mechanical mowing of pasture can be good tools for weed control.

- ✓ Clean up the previous winter manure piles- late summer and early fall can be a great time to spread the manure that has been composting since spring. Composted manure spreads easier and research has shown that composted manure actually has a higher nutrient content that is readily available for plant uptake. I would also recommend sampling the manure and seeing exactly what the nutrient content is and apply where the nutrients are most needed, FYI this is best done by having an up-to-date soil sample.
- ✓ Apply needed nutrients- Fall is a great time to apply phosphorus and potassium, after receiving your soil sample results call me and I can help walk you through how much phosphorus and Potassium to apply in the most economical way. Lime (if needed) can be applied and in most cases I recommend Dolomitic lime (higher in Magnesium) for pastures unless your soil sample shows a very high mag level.
- ✓ Reseeding or overseeding- Late summer and early fall can be a great time to seed new cool season grasses into existing pasture or renovate new pastures. For clover I often recommend waiting until late winter early spring and frost seeding.
- ✓ Manage your grazing height- Remember forages grow from the roots, the more you graze off the top the more root system is lost. Over grazing can be detrimental for forages going into the winter season. Maintain grazing heights to four inches or more.

Some other details to go over

- Junor Fair Beef BBQ – September 1st at the Ohio Valley Career and Technical Center.
- September 26-28, this three-day Artificial Insemination training will be located at the Jackson Research Farm, 19 Standpipe Road, Jackson Ohio. There is a \$100 fee for the course. Registrations will be to the first 20 producers to learn how to register contact me at (937) 544-2339 or Purdin.19@osu.edu
- October 4th Forages for Horses pasture walk located at Runway Stables 3081 Cross Road Winchester, Ohio 45697, hosted by Wanda Massy and Cory Bess, cost will be \$15, and meal will be included. Call the office at 937-544-2339 to RSVP

Ag Educator Words of Wisdom – "Life on a farm is a school of patience; you can't hurry the crops or make an ox in two days" - **Henri Alain**