

Weekly Article

9-20-2021

Fall Pasture Management

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. Where did September go? As we finish up the last week of September and start the month of October mother nature is going to be friendly for producers starting to harvest corn and soybeans. Last week was the Farm Science Review and was probably the coolest and wettest that I can ever recall in my lifetime. Last week's precipitation for the county ranged from 1.5-2.2 inches of rainfall, combine that with warm weather this week grasses will continue to grow well in our pastures. So, with all this growth many producers might be tempted to graze pasture as close and long as possible to save on hay supply. This might seem like a good idea now, but you might regret it next spring.

Fall pasture management is critical for producing a healthy pasture for spring growth. As I have made my rounds around the county, I have taken note of some several issues facing the majority of pastures including mine! Some of those issues include weeds, lack of water, overstocking, and short grazing heights. Here are some steps that can be taken now in the fall to help produce healthy pastures next spring.

1. **Soil testing-** It all starts with the soil; you can buy the most expensive seed and plant it at the highest rate possible but if your soil is lack fertility the plants will not thrive. Most of our cool season forages grow best with phosphorus levels between 20-30ppm and Potassium levels around 150-200ppm. Calcium levels and Magnesium levels should be evaluated also. Soils lower in calcium will present higher risk in milk fever and soils lower in Magnesium will present more of a risk for Grass Tetany. Soil PH levels should be maintained between 6.0-7.0 for optimum plant growth. Nitrogen applied to forages now can help stimulated growth and forage quality for later grazing, this works very well on predominantly Tall Fescue based pastures.
2. **Get weeds under control-** In the fall most of our problem weeds have gone to seed but this does not mean the battle is over. With warmer days warm season perennials will continue to grow and cause issues. Johnson grass is one weed to take note of and terminate this weed can cause issues with prussic acid poisoning after a frost event.
3. **Renovate with cereal grains-** Pastures heavily infested with weeds or declining stands could be good candidates for pasture renovations. The problem is that it is too late to plant our cool season forages such as tall fescue, orchard grass,

perennial ryegrass, and legumes. The next best option is to use cereal grains such as Winter Wheat, Cereal Rye, and many more. Terminating the pasture now and sowing these forages can give you a wealth of forage next spring to graze or harvest for hay. After harvesting in the spring, the pasture can be planted to cool season forages or planted to a warm season annual such as Sudan grass and reestablished late summer with a pasture mix if spring weather prevents planting.

4. **Grow Roots-** Remember this is the last boost in growth for pasture forages. Their main goal is to build roots and store carbohydrates for winter survival. Maintain grazing height between 4-6 inches and allow plants to rest before the first freeze. The more you graze off the top the more roots hairs are killed below ground.

Some other details to go over.

- USDA is updating the food assistance program or CFAP 2 program, making contract growers, livestock producers, and specialty crop producers eligible to modify their existing application or file for a new one by October 12th, 2021. Call the FSA office at (937) 544-2033 for more details.
- Black Walnut Market opens October 4th at Marvin Keim Family Farm located at 848 Tater Ridge Rd West Union Ohio 45693 \$18/100lbs is current market price.
- 170th Brown County Fair September 27th-October 2nd.

From the field

- Soybean harvest has begun, yield reports of 65-68 bu/ac.
- Stalk quality issues in corn keep an eye on lower portions of the stalk.
- Fall Calf weaning beginning, Stock yards are showing stronger demand for 500-600lb weaned calves.
- Slaughter cow market is staying strong. Start thinking about culling instead of feeding through winter.
- Burley tobacco harvest is wrapping up, wrapper tobacco market opens mid-October.
- Total of 50 Armyworm moths were collected in 7 days. I will check the traps again this week.
- Hessian fly date for planting Winter Wheat is October 5th for Southern Ohio.
- Pumpkin harvest is wrapping up (2021 crop looks very good)