

# The Back Forty News



FULTON COUNTY U OF A COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE NEWSLETTER

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October 2018

## From the County Agent's desk...

It feels like we are just right around the corner from cooler temperatures. A hot spell, along with some tropical storm rainfall in September really pushed the

grass back out. If the grazing management is there, along with potentially a shot of nitrogen, it's fathomable to have grass to graze through December before feeding the first bale of hay. Couple that with opportunity to plant winter annuals, and you've got a good grazing plan going through the end of 2018. Planting of winter annuals is one thing we'll address later in this newsletter.

Other goings-on this fall will be our fall brucellosis vaccinations route with AR Livestock and Poultry, as well as the fall private applicator training for getting a license to purchase restricted use pesticides. Lastly, see the insert in this month's newsletter on this past year's demonstrations.

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## Winter Annual Planting

### **Fast Facts:**

- Research, farm demos offer keys to planning annual winter forage planning, use
- Early September a time to plan for late October grazing

Matching production of winter forage annuals with livestock needs can be a challenging, but research and farm demonstrations by the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture can help in decision making.

### **Forage brassicas**

“Forage turnip and rape must be planted early for fall grazing,” said John Jennings, professor-forages for the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture. “Brassicas planted in late August to early September can produce grazeable forage by late October.”

Tillage is required for good establishment. Light disking may be adequate. Clean tilled seedbeds are best. Brassicas can be grazed from October through December. A combination planting of forage brassica and ryegrass has proven to be an effective practice. The brassica produces forage for fall grazing and the ryegrass produces forage for spring grazing. Forage brassica varieties are much more productive than “garden-type” varieties.

### **Small grains, ryegrass**

Jennings said that small grains and ryegrass intended for grazing by Nov. 1-15 must be planted before Sept. 15. Planting on a tilled seedbed or no-tilled into harvested crop fields is required for this to work. Apply 50 pounds per acre of nitrogen after the stand comes up to ensure growth. Apply phosphorous and potassium according to a soil test.

“However, if no soil test is available, be sure to apply at least 50 pounds each of potassium and phosphorous,” Jennings said. Apply 50 pounds more nitrogen in February for sustained growth into spring.

“Due to the tillage requirement, this option will not fit every case or every field,” he said. “

However, selecting specific fields for this early planting option may fill a void until other forage is available.”

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### **For grazing by Dec. 1-15**

Winter annuals intended for grazing in early December can be interseeded into warm-season grass sod or planted in crop fields from Sept. 15 to Oct. 1. The grass sod should be suppressed with a low rate of glyphosate herbicide or with moderate disking when planting this early to prevent competition with the small grain seedlings. Planting can be done with a no-till drill or by disking followed by broadcast of seed and dragging with a harrow. Apply 50 pounds per acre of nitrogen after the stand comes up to ensure growth. Apply phosphorous and potassium according to soil test. If no soil test is available, be sure to apply at least 50 pounds each of phosphorous and potassium. Apply 50 pounds more nitrogen in February for sustained growth into spring.

### **For grazing February to early March**

Planting annuals after mid-October into November will allow good establishment, but forage production will be delayed until February or early March. Fertilizer application can be delayed until February since growth potential is limited during mid-winter.

### **How much to plant**

Unsure how much to plant?

"Research has shown that a good measure for determining planting acreage is one-tenth an acre pre cow per day of the week to be grazed through the winter," Jennings said. "Or example, if cows will be limit grazed three days per week then plant three-tenths of an acre per cow."

More grazing time requires more acreage.

"Dr. Paul Beck's work has shown that cows limit grazed on winter annuals two days per week and fed hay the remaining time perform quite well," he said. In that study, the "grazing day" was an eight-hour day and not a 24-hour period. As forage growth increases during the early spring, cows can be allowed to graze more frequently.

Beck is a professor in animal sciences based at the Southwest Research and Extension Center in Hope.

"This is an effective way to match the increased nutrient requirements of spring calving cowherds and to supplement low quality hay," Jennings said.

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## Testing Seed Germination on Winter Annuals

Commercial seed companies list seed lot information on the seed tag including seed purity, percent germination, and the date when tested. Seed germination percent can decline over time especially under less than ideal storage conditions. Sometimes producers may have seed that is held over from prior years or farm-grown seed may be available that does not have a germination test. How can you determine if old seed past the warranted date or untested seed will germinate?

It is simple to do your own germination test. Collect a representative sample of seed from the seed lot in question. Representative samples include all types of seed in the seed lot including small, discolored, broken, etc. - not just the best looking seed in the lot. Moisten a paper towel and count out 50 or 100 seeds in a line across the centerline of the towel. Fold the towel over to hold the seed, roll it up, and place it in a sealable plastic bag. For large seeds like corn, add an extra teaspoon of water to the bag to make sure the seed can imbibe enough water - don't overdo the amount of water. The idea is to keep the towel moist, but not flooded. Keep the bag at room-temperature for 3-5 days for most species, up to 7-10 days for bermudagrass or some native grasses. After this time, open the paper towel and count the number of sprouted seeds. For 100-seed samples, the number sprouted equals germination percent and for 50-seed samples, double the number of sprouted seeds to determine germination percent.

### **Using the test results:**

If your germination test shows 80%+ germination percent, you can generally plant at standard recommended seeding rates to achieve a good forage stand. If the germination rate is less than 80%, increase the seeding rate to account for the lower seed viability. Increase the seeding rate by 25% if the germination rate is 60-79%, and double the seeding rate if the germination rate is 50-60%.

## Fall Soil Testing

Remember, it's never too early to start thinking about soil testing for next spring. In fact, now is the best time to get it done. Keep in mind, that it can take as long as 3-4 weeks to get your results back, and if you were to need to lime, it can take 4-6 months for the lime to break down chemically and actually raise the pH of your soil. Better pH means better efficiency of your fertilizer dollars. Should you be planning on fertilizing in March-May, depending on your forage species, now is the

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time to be getting those in to the office. Soil testing is a free service offered by the Cooperative Extension Service. If you need any tips on how to sample your soil, feel free to give us a call at 870-895-3301.

### **Ragweed and Woolly Croton Control**

I've seen lots of fields this fall that have not produced grass like they should with the return of fall precipitation, and the reason is competition. Lanceleaf ragweed, common ragweed, and woolly croton could've been easily controlled in early June with 1 quart/acre 2,4-D amine. They aren't as recognizable, but they're there...small green, tender plants mixed amongst the desirable forages. In early June, it just looks like a lush green field of grazing, but it's misleading. Even though cattle will graze on tender ragweed when it's young, that benefit is not worth how the field will look and produce this time of year.

Despite this, folks are still spraying it. It's way too late now. Sure, an application will make the plants sick and wrinkled up, but they've done their damage. The seed that it produced is likely viable and will contribute to next year's weeds. Not to mention, the soil nutrients, rainfall, and sunshine have already been stolen. The underlying fescue/bermuda/etc. has been suppressed and won't yield nearly like it would've if the weed competition wasn't there. Your best bet now would probably be to bushhog it to get that cover off of the field, and then plan on spraying it next spring.

### **Private Applicator Training (PAT) for Restricted Use Pesticides**

Local farmers, ranchers, and other agricultural producers who wish to renew an expiring pesticide license or receive a first time private pesticide applicator license will have the opportunity to receive the required training. Some of the folks that are up for recertification will have gotten a letter from the State Plant Board notifying them that their certification is up. If you are receiving this letter, then according to our records and the Arkansas State Plant Board, your license is about to expire.

The training will be held in Salem on *Tuesday, October 30th, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.* at the Fulton County Fairgrounds in the Hickinbotham-Miller building. This training is **NOT** for certification of commercial (for-hire) pesticide applicators!

There is a \$20 per person fee which *must* be paid at the door at the time of training. This fee is not related to the licensing fees charged by the State Plant Board. It is only for the training. The fee for the license is \$10 for one (1) year or \$45 for five (5) years. That amount you will pay in later to the State Plant Board, not the Fulton Co. Extension Office. Checks or exact cash preferred.

### **Spring Brucellosis (Bangs) Vaccinations**

The spring brucellosis vaccinations are coming up soon. Livestock and Poultry technician, Franky Sharp, and I will tentatively be out the week of November 5th. The definite day of the week is still to be determined. If you have heifers to be vaccinated, please let us know by Tuesday, October 30th. Return the enclosed cut-out card to our office at P.O. Box 308, Salem, AR 72576 or call us at 870-895-3301. Include detailed directions to where the heifers will be. **Please don't assume that Franky and I necessarily know where you'll be. We both visit lots of farms throughout the year, and the names and locations start to run together sometimes!**

Vaccinations are free of charge. Heifers must be at least 4 months old but not older than 12 months old to be eligible for vaccination. We will use the same procedure as in the past and notify you by letter before you are scheduled for vaccinations. You will need handling facilities to confine and work the calves. Also, you or a representative for you must be present at the time of vaccination or the technician will not vaccinate the heifers. If no one is there, we'll have to move along to the next stop. Remember, the time that we schedule for your stop could be give or take an hour or so. It depends on how fast or held up we are at prior stops.

Return by: \_\_\_\_\_

To: County Extension Agent – Staff Chair

In reply to your inquiry, I have \_\_\_\_\_ heifer calves, 4 to 12 months of age, which I would like to have vaccinated for Brucellosis (Bang's Disease).

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Community \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Farm \_\_\_\_\_

CES-443 Brucellosis Vaccination Reply Card

(8-01)

*Brad A. Runick*

Brad Runick

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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P O Box 308  
118 Locust Street - Ste 107  
Salem, AR 72576