

Extension Notes

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

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Fall Weed Control Options for Pastures

As warm-season plants in the pasture naturally begin to die back, cool-season weeds will sprout: chickweed, henbit and purple deadnettle will fill the voids. Other weeds such as buttercup and musk thistle will likely be more prevalent in the next spring.

One option to tackle weed problems is to apply broadleaf pasture herbicides in mid to late fall or early next spring. However, herbicides alone may not be the best solution to revitalize pastures for the next grazing season.

The first step to determining your weed management options is to do a critical evaluation of pasture fields. Not only do you need to take an inventory of the current weeds present, but you also need to scout the field to look for any developing weed problems in their seedling growth stages. Identify areas of the field with potential problems such as musk or other biennial thistles, poisonous hemlock, buttercup and common chickweed. Also, you should assess the growth of desirable forage grasses and legumes.

Your primary question then becomes—does the existing stand of desirable forages appear adequate and potentially competitive enough against any emerging weed problems? If the forage stand is acceptable and weed pressure is light, the best course of action likely is to follow routine pasture management practices. However, if you see developing weed problems, you may want to take action to begin correcting the problem. In some cases, you may have no good solutions to correct all your weed problems. Here are some points to consider as you make those decisions.

After you evaluate the pasture, you must decide whether to drill or overseed more forages into existing pasture to improve the stand of desirable forage grasses or to spray herbicides to control emerging broadleaf weeds. You will not be able to do both at the same time since most pasture herbicides have the potential to injure newly emerging forage grasses or legumes.

For pasture herbicides that contain only 2, 4-D, general recommendations are to wait four to six weeks after spraying before reseeding forage crops. Other broadleaf herbicides may require waiting six months or more between the application and seeding forage legumes; make sure and check the label of the specific herbicide product you use. As a general rule of thumb, if you decide to spray this fall, you will need to wait until next spring before seeding additional forages. If you reseed first, then you should wait until the new seedlings have well-established root systems before applying herbicides. It's important to note that anytime you use broadleaf herbicides, you'll likely kill any clovers or other desirable legumes in the treated areas.

One alternative to consider in some situations is using a total-pasture renovation technique to control or suppress growth of the weedy vegetation followed by interseeding more forage grasses or legumes. This assumes that you don't need the field for grazing animals until the newly seeded forages become well established. In this approach, you apply an herbicide product containing either paraquat or glyphosate to "burn back" or kill all existing vegetation before reseeding. Since paraquat and glyphosate have no soil-

residual activity, you can immediately interseed desirable forages into the soil after herbicide application.

Yet another course of action is a “wait and see” approach. But, keep in mind that weeds are much easier to control when they are small and immature. Although you have several options to consider for managing weed problems in the fall, few of these options are viable without some rainfall.

For more information on pasture weed management, contact the Carter County Cooperative Extension Service. The Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment is an Equal Opportunity Organization with respect to education and employment and authorization to provide research, education information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to economic or social status and will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, creed, religion, political belief, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, marital status, genetic information, age, veteran status, physical or mental disability or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Upcoming Events:

- The **Grayson Farmer’s Market** is open on Saturdays from 9:00 AM until sell out. The market is located in the shed behind the Extension Office. The **Olive Hill Farmer’s Market** is located in the Save-a-Lot parking lot and is open on Saturdays and Wednesdays at 8:00 AM and Mondays at 3:00 PM until sell out each day.
- Hay sampling is underway now for the **East KY Hay Contest**. Call 474-6686 to request sampling. Participants will receive a free nutrient analysis of their hay.
- **Hike & Learn** – September 7th @ 1:00 PM – Laurel Gorge Cultural Heritage Center
- **Carter County Extension District Board** – September 12th @ 10:00 AM
- **CAIP Cost-share Informational Meeting** – September 12th @ 6:00 PM