

## Extension Notes

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES

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### Stockpile Forages to Extend the Grazing Season

Good pasture management can help extend the grazing season further into the fall and early winter. Take advantage of good growing conditions to obtain high-quality pasture for late fall and early winter grazing. Stockpiling helps broaden the pasture season for the cow herd, reduces feed and labor costs by lowering the amount of hay needed and provides an ideal location for the beef cow herd to winter and calve.

It's easy to begin to stockpile. Simply take cattle off pastures in late summer, apply nitrogen fertilizer and allow grass to accumulate growth through late fall. Then, put cattle on the pasture one section at a time until they've finished grazing the whole field.

Take soil samples for analyses to determine pasture requirements for phosphorus, potassium and lime. You'll need this information to renovate with clover in the spring.

Tall fescue and Kentucky bluegrass are the best grasses to stockpile in Kentucky. Both retain green color and forage quality late into winter, are somewhat resistant to low temperatures and form a good sod. Tall fescue produces more fall and winter growth than Kentucky bluegrass.

Nitrogen and moisture are critical to successfully stockpiling grasses.

Apply nitrogen in mid-August. Topdress at the rate of 40 to 60 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre for Kentucky bluegrass. Use 40 to 100 pounds of actual nitrogen per acre on tall fescue.

Numerous studies show wise fertilizer use and timing results in high yields during fall and early winter. Tall fescue crude protein and digestibility are better during fall and early winter than at any other time of the year.

Yields can be very good when water is available during the stockpiling period. Tall fescue can produce two tons of dry matter up to late November. With adequate water, producers can achieve 25 pounds of dry matter for each pound of nitrogen used.

After frost, let cattle graze grass-legume fields quickly before plants deteriorate. Then, put animals on the stockpiled grass fields. For the most efficient use of stockpiled fields, establish a strip grazing system by using a temporary electric fence to section off areas of the field. The first grazing area should have water and mineral sources. When animals have grazed this area, move the fence to open a new strip. Repeat this process until the entire field has been grazed.

Stockpiled grass is an excellent choice for fall-calving cows because it can be used to meet high nutritional needs after calving and during the breeding season. Grazing stockpiled grasses may offer the most benefit to

spring-calving cows in thin body condition during the fall. Growing, weaned cattle can be grazed on stockpiled fescue. Using stockpiled grasses helps lower feed costs when backgrounding cattle.

For more information about pasture management and other topics, 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.
- **Farmer's Market Kid's Day** will be on July 29<sup>th</sup> from 9:30-11:00 at the Grayson Farmer's Market. There will be a variety of activities for youth to participate in and earn Kid's Bucks to be spent at the market.
- **Little Sandy Beekeepers Association** Meeting – August 1<sup>st</sup> @ 6:30 PM
- **Carter County Fair Exhibit Hall** Entries Accepted August 7<sup>th</sup> from 11:00-1:00. Category descriptions are available at <http://www.cartercountyfair.org/page18/index.html>.