



Winter Forage Production

Although Florida has a mild winter climate compared to most of the United States, warm-season perennial forages provide limited grazing during the late fall and winter months. As a result, from November until April, little forage is available from perennial grasses except for cool-season (winter) annual forages. However, successful tillage systems and over-seeding of perennial pastures can improve performance of winter annual forages in winter pastures. Understanding when various winter forages are most productive is important to designing a forage program that best suits livestock enterprises. Blends of certain forages will allow for extended winter grazing and stability of a forage system, which is desirable until adequate summer forage is available.

If bahiagrass or bermudagrass is to be over-seeded successfully with winter annual forages, the following steps should be taken to ensure better success. Over-seed bahiagrass a few weeks later than for bermudagrass, probably in November or at least after cool weather has slowed down the growth of bahiagrass. Be sure that adequate moisture is available for germination of the winter annual. Make sure that bahiagrass or bermudagrass is grazed or cut close prior to planting winter annuals. If the field has to be planted early, use a growth-regulation chemical, such as paraquat, on bahiagrass to knock out top growth of the bahiagrass and reduce competition with the winter annual. Provide more tillage on bahiagrass pastures or an aggressive no-till drill

when over-seeding in bahia or bermudagrass. For bahiagrass and bermudagrass pastures, make sure the no-till drill is cutting through the organic layer or surface root system to allow for sufficient contact between the soil and the winter-annual seed. Bahiagrass should be tilled heavily enough so that it does not regrow immediately. If planting on a clean-tilled seedbed following bahiagrass or bermudagrass, allow several weeks for plants to decay before planting, as the decaying process will tie up nitrogen needed for growth of the winter annual. Use early maturing varieties of small grains to minimize the influence of the winter grazing on production of summer grass.

Since winter grazing is normally needed by December, plant these forages about eight weeks earlier. An example of ideal timing would be to plant wheat, oats, or rye on a prepared seedbed in October. Data show that over-seeded bermudagrass will produce as much total forage over the season as a prepared seedbed, but in most years the forage produced in that way will not be ready to graze until mid-January.

For more in depth information on this subject please refer to the EDIS publication: Tillage and overseeding Pastures for Winter Forage Production in North Florida: D.L. Wright, A.R. Blount, J.J. Marois, and R.D. Barnett from which this information is derived. If you have any questions or would like to review your winter forages, please feel free to give me a call.

Ken Johnson

Director and Livestock Agent

DeSoto County Extension Office

Calendar of Events

November 2012

- 17 Ag-Fest 2012 Cattle Prospect Show
- 19-20 Cracker Cattle and Horse Gatherin' and sale
- 29-30 FCA Year-End Quarterly Meeting

December 2012

- 7-8 2012 Hardee Cattle Show
- 8 Hendry County Cattlemen's Association Youth Ranch Rodeo Series—Clewiston
- 9-12 5th National Conference on Grazing Lands "Grazing lands, a Magical Environment"

Beef Management Checklist November

- Have soils tested.
- Observe cows daily to detect calving difficulty.
- Use mineral with high level of magnesium if grass tetany has been a problem in the past.
- Check for external parasites and treat if needed.
- Maintain adequate nutrient level for cow herd.
- Calve in well-drained pastures.
- Survey pastures for poisonous plants.
- Start summarizing your annual records, both production and financial-then you will have time to make adjustments for tax purposes.
- Re-evaluate winter feeding program and feed supplies.
- Get breeding soundness exams on bull battery so you have time to find replacements if some fail.
- Implement bull conditioning program.
- Review plans and arrangements for the upcoming breeding season.
- Check progress of developing replacement heifers - are they going to meet your target weight by the start of the breeding season?

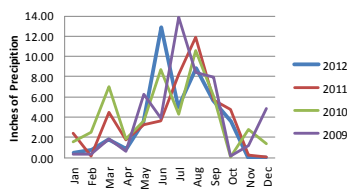
December

- Begin grazing small grain pastures (if ready).
- Check mineral feeder.
- Check for external parasites and treat if needed.
- Deworm cows and heifers prior to winter feeding season.
- Observe regularly for calving difficulties.
- Rotate calving pastures to prevent diseases.
- Watch for scours in calves.
- Investigate health of bulls before you buy.
- Have dead animals posted by a veterinarian or diagnostic laboratory.
- Complete review of management plan and update for next year. Check replacement heifers to be sure they will be ready to breed 3 - 4 weeks prior to the main cow herd.

2009-2012 Monthly Precipitation

	2012	2011	2010	2009
Jan	0.48	2.39	1.59	0.32
Feb	0.75	0.17	2.53	0.37
Mar	1.80	4.47	7.03	1.83
Apr	0.83	1.71	1.85	0.62
May	3.45	3.22	3.58	6.23
Jun	12.92	3.67	8.66	3.95
Jul	4.96	8.22	4.26	13.88
Aug	8.82	11.92	10.57	8.44
Sep	5.63	5.66	6.04	7.91
Oct	3.62	4.79	0.04	0.17
Nov		0.24	2.74	1.16
Dec		0.07	1.33	4.86
	39.64	46.53	50.22	49.74

2009-2012 Rainfall



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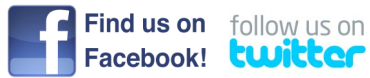
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Cattle Board

Board Prices	Tue Nov 06	Wed Nov 07	Thu Nov 08	Fri Nov 09	Mon Nov 12	Change
Live Cattle	124.95	125.43	125.75	125.35	125.80	0.45
Feeder Cattle	144.20	144.50	144.20	144.00	143.53	-0.47
Corn	7.44	7.41	7.39	7.18	7.18	0.00

Boxed Beef	Tue Nov 06	Wed Nov 07	Thu Nov 08	Fri Nov 09	Mon Nov 12	Change
Boxed Beef - Choice	193.65	193.93	193.24	191.87	193.30	1.43
Boxed Beef - Select	176.45	176.16	175.95	173.56	173.71	0.15
Boxed Beef - C/S Spread	17.20	17.77	17.28	18.31	19.59	1.28

Other	Tue Nov 06	Wed Nov 07	Thu Nov 08	Fri Nov 09	Mon Nov 12	Change
Est. Cattle Slaughter	114,000	128,000	116,000	113,000	129,000	16,000
Daily Drop	12.85	12.86	12.94	12.92	12.92	0.00
Cutter Cow Cutout	160.09	159.72	159.80	160.05	159.89	-0.16
Beef Carcass - Ch	184.85	184.70	184.15	183.14	183.70	0.56