Stockpiled Fescue for Winter Grazing

In this area fescue grass is our main source of forage for beef cattle farmers. We tend to have a love hate relationship with fescue grass. We love it because it is hardy and can take the mismanagement we usually give it. What we don’t like are the effects the endophyte in tall fescue has on our cattle. Improved management can often times reduce the negatives and improve overall forage quality. One way to do this is by stockpiling fescue and utilizing it during the winter months.

How to Stockpile Fescue

First you need to determine which pasture you want to stockpile. Remove all animals from the pasture around the beginning to middle of August. It is important to graze or clip the fescue to about 3 to 4 inches and then allow it to rest before applying fertilizer. Applying 50 to 75 pounds of nitrogen in the month of September should have you on the right track for stockpiling fescue given adequate rainfall follows.

The ideal target date to begin grazing your animals on the stockpiled fescue is usually the middle of December. By then you have maximized your growth potential and nutrition is usually at its highest. In order to maximize your forage and grazing potential, intensive rotational grazing will be your best bet! By restricting the amount of grass your animals have access to, you increase grazing efficiency and reduce waste. For more information or help getting started stockpiling fescue contact the Alexander County Extension Center.
LOCAL GOAT PRODUCTION WORKSHOP PLANNED FOR AUGUST 25TH

Are you looking for a better way to control parasitic worms such as the haemonchus contortus (barber’s pole worm) in your goat herd? Are you concerned that you may be relying too heavily on de-wormers for control and that their efficiency has decreased? If so please join me on Thursday, August 25th at 6:00 pm at the Alexander County Cooperative Extension Center and learn about the FAMACHA Program. This program will show you how to evaluate your goats and keep records in order to achieve the best possible control.

The information and seminar is free, however if you would like to be certified and receive an official FAMACHA card to use in your own herd there will be a $12.00 fee for the card. If you would like more information on this seminar or would like to register to attend, please contact the Alexander County Center at 828-632-4451.

Area Feeder Calf Sale Dates

If you are looking for a better way to market your calves than selling them on the weekly sale, you may want to give the State Graded Feeder Calf Sales a try. Calves sold through these sales are weighed upon arrival and graded by NCDA Graders. Feeder calves must be steers or heifers and be vaccinated for Blackleg and Malignant Edema. Sale dates are September 22nd for the Statesville Regional Feeder Calf Sale and September 29th for the North Wilkesboro Feeder Calf Sale.

For more information or consignment forms please contact the Alexander County Extension Center. Consignments are appreciated two weeks prior to the sale date to ensure adequate number of cattle for a successful sale!

Capture More Value with Your Cattle!

Producing cows that fit your environment and calves that fit the market is no easy test. Join us at 12:00 noon September 14 for the 2011 Commercial Cattlemen’s Symposium at the Sheraton Imperial in Durham, NC. This event will help producers develop cattle selection strategies that will capture more value from their resources and explore innovative marketing opportunities.

Topics to be covered are Essential Cow Herd Traits, How the Rate of Hair Coat Shedding Effects Cow Performance, Cow Herd Selection for Improved Profitability and many others. To receive more information on this event and registration details please contact the Alexander County Extension Center at 828-632-4451.

Nine members of the Alexander County 4-H Livestock Club recently competed in the State 4-H Livestock Judging Competition on June 28th in Raleigh. Cody Fox, Kyle Mayberry, Blake Millsaps, and Gabrielle Adams competed in the Senior Division and placed 6th in the state. Seth Tadt, Brooke Proffitt and Michala Brown also competed in the Senior Division and placed 11th in the state! Gavin Adams and Noah Proffitt competed as individuals in the Junior Division.

Special recognition was given to the Senior Team of Cody Fox, Kyle Mayberry, Blake Millsaps, and Gabrielle Adams for placing fifth in the meat goat division.

A special thanks to the Alexander County Cattlemen’s Association, Traci Fox of Little Stitches and Alexander County 4-H for their sponsorship of the 2011 Alexander County 4-H Livestock Judging Team and to all the team members for their hard work and dedication to the livestock industry. Allison Brown served as coach for the teams.
Soybeans and Hot Weather
Jim Dunphy, NCSU

When temperatures get up to 95 degrees or more, soybeans tend to:

• Close their stomates to conserve moisture within the leaf. They can't move enough water through the plant to keep up with that high an evapotranspiration demand. Soil moisture levels, therefore, have little to do with it. However the last several weeks we have been hit with both barrels as it has been drought conditions with temperatures higher than 95 degrees.
• Stop producing photosynthate, since carbon dioxide can't get in through those closed stomates either.  
• Stop growing vegetatively. No photosynthate, no growth. If the plants make it to 36-inches tall and lapped row middles anyway, losing those days of growth was of little consequence. If they don't get that big by flowering (in determinate varieties), the lost growing days will have been more serious.
• Abort flowers. Not a big deal, since soybeans can replace those flowers, and they don't seem to care much which flowers become pods.  
• Abort small pods. This is a little more serious, but the plants may very well have enough pods left anyway. If a pod was about half full size or bigger, it probably did not abort.  
• Abort seeds within larger pods if the seeds were still pretty small.  
• Produce smaller seeds if the seeds were too big to abort.  
• Remember that soybeans typically produce way more flowers than the combine will ever find as pods, and will start more pods than will make it to harvest. That's one of the major ways they survive adversity like this. The net result will probably not be much worse than losing a few days of potential production. I wouldn't expect any lasting effect of this response to high temperatures.

FAIR TIME IS ALMOST HERE!

Do you grow prize winning roses, scrumptious sweet-potatoes, sunny sunflowers, peppy peppers, and just about any other fruit and vegetable you can think of? Do you own chickens that produce prize winning quality eggs or would you like to show off your excellent canning and food preservation skills? Are you a skilled quilter or painter? These and so many more are all categories for entries at the Alexander County Agricultural Fair coming up September 12th through the 17th. Entries for both adult and youth will be taken at the Fairgrounds Exhibit hall on Sunday September 11th from 1:00 to 5:00 pm and on Monday September 12th from 8:00 to 5:00 pm. All entries must be in the exhibit hall by 5:00 pm on Monday September 12th.

Gathering up your entries and helping your kid’s get their entries together can be a great family project and quality time spent together. All entries must have been made or grew within the last year. If you would like a fair catalog to begin compiling your entries please contact the Alexander County Cooperative Extension Center at 632-4451 or stop by and pick one up. Also don’t forget to check out the Livestock Shows during the fair! The Sheep and Rabbit Show will be on Tuesday, September 13th, the Goat Show is Thursday, September 15th, and the Dairy and Beef Cattle Show will be held Friday, September 16th. Please come out and support our youth!