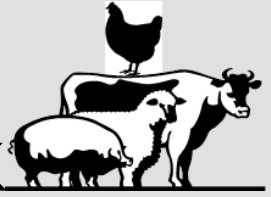


# Athens County Livestock



October | 2015



## Fall has arrived

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### Building the Program

On Oct. 6, I will celebrate one year here in Athens County. What a year it's been. Every week finds me meeting new folks, finding out what farmers are doing and what they are not doing. I've seen the good, the bad and the ugly. I now have a better idea of what direction I need to head. It looks like January, February, March, and part of April are already booked up with programs. Now all I have to do is to get out there to fill in the gaps with farm visits.

It's also been a busy time on the farm. Building fences, making animal housing, and repairing the old house has kept me hopping. I feel really blessed in having some place to put everything, but there is always a need for more space. Finding a place for everything after a move always seems to be a challenge, but moving a farm is a multi-year process. My goal is to have everything put away by my fifth anniversary here.

# The Need for Testing Harvested Forages

*Jeff Fisher, Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator OSU Extension Pike County*

Ongoing weather related challenges to haying operations have resulted in hay quality that is less than ideal for reproductive livestock. Forages that were harvested late due to rain and wet field conditions will have a decrease in crude protein, soluble carbohydrates, and total digestible nutrients (TDN). Additionally, as the plant matures, fiber components of lignin and hemi-cellulose will increase. These cause the animal to reduce its voluntary intake of feed and slow down the rate that the forage moves through its body.

If these harvested forages are not processed, then digestibility can decrease to the point that the animals can't adsorb nutrients at the levels that it may need for growth, reproduction, or lactation. Forage testing is the only way to determine if your harvested feedstuffs will meet the animal's nutrient requirements. Refer to the OSU Extension Beef Team website <http://u.osu.edu/beefteam/> library for information on forages and winter feeding.

Test results of grass hay samples that we have received so far are just barely adequate for maintenance of early to mid-gestation mature cows. When comparing these results to the Nutrient Requirements of Beef Cattle, it is evident that even the earliest cut hay does not provide adequate protein and digestible nutrients for cows in the final third of pregnancy.

Another consideration is that the highest demands during pregnancy often occur during the winter when colder temperature, precipitation, and wind will increase nutrient demand.

Here are some tips to manage your winter feeding program:

- Take representative samples. Using a hay probe to obtain a composite sample will give better estimates of forage quality. Forages fed during the winter can then be sorted so the best quality can be fed during the last trimester of pregnancy. Nutrient needs can increase another 25-35% with lactation, but hopefully this coincides with grazing high quality forage. Your local Extension office can assist with forage testing and ration balancing.
- Know what your animals weigh. Check cull sales receipts or weigh a few cows to determine what your average cow weighs. Many producers are finding that their mature cows are heavier than they thought thus requiring more feed. Cows late in pregnancy will weigh around 100 pounds heavier from the weight of the calf and fetal membranes.
- Sort Into management groups. Utilize body condition scoring to separate thin cows from the average of the herd. Heifer replacements and aged cows require higher nutrient requirements as well for weight gain. Sorting allows higher quality and cost feeds to be targeted for the most good.
- Identify sources of supplemental feeds. Hay that is low in crude protein can be supplemented with stockpiled pasture, dried distillers grain solubles (DDGS), soybean meal, or other locally available sources. Compare the cost of protein per pound and method of feeding to determine the best alternative. The total ration needs to be balanced. Simply providing a free choice protein supplement is costly and overconsumption requires the animal to either void the excess, or if nutrient deficient, she will utilize more energy to break the protein down and will remain thin. Energy demands increase during periods of environmental stress and can be cheaply supplemented in our region with com.
- Method of feeding. Plan now as to how you are going to feed supplements. These don't necessarily need to be fed on a daily basis but will require adequate bunk space that can withstand pressure from mature cows. A feeding pad is beneficial where soil types and conditions can lead to mud and erosion. Range cubes are an alternative that is not readily available in our area but can be ordered in bulk for the entire feeding season to become a convenient alternative.

## Hay Testing Program

During the months of September and October, we will be emphasizing the importance of Hay Testing. With that in mind, you will get ration formulations for your herd with each hay sample submitted. These will give you several different options for supplementing the hay that you are feeding your cattle. As mentioned in the article, weather conditions have affected the quality of this year's hay. You will probably need to supplement. The key to saving money is to feed only what is needed and not a single pound more. Most people over feed just to be safe. A hay test costs \$22 and will pay for itself if you end up having to buy a few less bags of feed or a lick tub this winter.

We do have a hay probe if you would like to borrow it.

*Hay Testing costs just \$22 and could save you money in feed savings for cows being over fed or lost productivity for cows being under fed.*



**GRAZING MANAGEMENT & PASTURE WALK WORKSHOP**  
SATURDAY, 10/24/15 10:00 AM— 2:00 PM  
EASTERN AGRICULTURE RESEARCH STATION-BELLE VALLEY  
(ST. RT. 215 EAST OF BELLE VALLEY, OH)  
ADDRESS: 16714 WOLF RUN ROAD, CALDWELL, OHIO

Participants will learn grazing management principles, see plots where Agrotain® and NutriSphere-N (urea nitrogen stabilizer additives) were used, see a weed control study using combinations of mowing and herbicides in an attempt to reduce weed pressure, discuss Pasture Management Options and look at data on seed selection for hay and pasture fields.

**10:00–10:10 Refreshments, Welcome & Introductions**

**10:10-10:30 Hay Samples (Guess the Quality & Learn the Lab Analysis)** Ted Wiseman, OSU Extension, Perry

**10:30-11:15 Weed Control (Application & Chemicals)** Mark Landefeld, & Clif Little, OSU Extension

**11:15 -12:00 Pasture Management** Jeff McCutcheon, OSU Extension Morrow County

**12:00 - 12:30 Lunch**

**12:30-1:00 Nitrogen Use for Stockpiling (Agrotain® & NutriSphere-N, N stabilizers), RyzUp & TakeOff Products for Stockpiling** Chris Penrose, OSU Extension, Morgan Co., & Dan Lima, Belmont County

**1:00-2:00 Seeds and Seeding Selection for Meadows and Pastures** Kevin Fowler, Fowler Seeds

Reservations are requested for food and handout information preparation please.

For more information contact Mark Landefeld, OSU Extension @ 740-472-0810 or landefeld.6@osu.edu or your local Extension office.



Grazing Management & Pasture Walk Workshop

**Registration Deadline:**  
10/19/2015

**Return to:**  
OSU Extension – Athens County  
280 W. Union St.  
Athens, OH 45701

For Snacks, Lunch and Reservations

# Attending \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount Enclosed

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Address  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone

Check enclosed, payable to OSU Extension





# Fall Grazing Management

Rory Lewandowski, Extension Educator Wayne County

Grazing management during the months of September and October directly impacts the vigor and growth of pasture in the spring. For the perennial grass plant, the fall season is a time of laying the foundation for next year's growth. Although seed production is one way that a perennial plant can survive from year to year, in pastures the more important way that plants survive is through re-growth from buds located at the crown of the plant. It is during the short day, long night periods in the fall of the year that flower buds are formed/initiated on the crown of the plant. The plant leaf tissue dies during the winter, but the buds and roots of the plant remain as living tissues over the winter and continue to respire and burn energy. If root reserves are insufficient the plant may die over the winter. If the plant survives but root reserves are low, spring re-growth and vigor of the plant is reduced.

From a plant health standpoint, overgrazing during the fall is more detrimental to the plant compared to overgrazing followed by rest in the early part of the growing season. Here is the reason why. Early in the growing season environmental conditions are generally favorable for rapid growth. If a plant is overgrazed, carbohydrate reserves are mobilized to start new leaf growth. The long day lengths, warm air temperatures, cool soil temperatures and good soil moisture all combine to help the plant grow leaf area quickly. New leaf growth allows the plant to once again capture energy from the sun through photosynthesis. The plant rapidly achieves a positive energy balance. Photosynthesis replaces the carbohydrate reserves and continues to provide energy needed for further leaf growth.

In the fall of the year environmental conditions are not as favorable for rapid leaf growth. We can't count upon an overgrazed plant being able to recover and generate a lot of leaf growth. Physiologically the plant growth response or the ability to put out new leaf material is more sensitive to low temperature than the rate of photosynthesis. In other words, even when plant growth might be very slow, if there is leaf area present,

photosynthesis is not slowed down. On a practical level this means that since the plant growth rate is slowed the carbohydrates produced by photosynthesis during this time period accumulate in plant storage organs. This is exactly what the plant needs to survive the winter and produce new growth next spring.

Once we reach the fall period it is critical that grass plants be managed to insure that adequate leaf area is left after a grazing pass. Photosynthesis will provide the carbohydrates needed for winter storage, provided there is adequate leaf area. Since leaf growth will be slow, this means leaving a typical grazing residual plus some extra. For orchardgrass this probably means 4 to 5 inches at a minimum. Tall fescue and bluegrass should probably be managed to leave a 3 to 4 inch residual.

What is the consequence of not maintaining enough leaf area in the fall and overgrazing the plant? The 2012 drought provided us with the perfect example as quite a few pastures ended up being overgrazed through the fall period. The following spring I saw pastures that were overgrazed in the fall were very slow to green up and start growth in the spring. I saw overgrazed pastures exhibit lower growth rates. Some pastures never got back to pre-drought productivity.

I sometimes get asked at what point in the fall grasses can be grazed to soil level without harming the plant. This has to be once top growth has ceased and when soil temperature falls below 40 degrees F. Depending upon the year, that is likely to be in mid to late November. Of course, overgrazing in the fall of the year might be used as a strategy to weaken a dominant grass stand and set it up for a frost seeding of clover. This could allow the clover seedling to compete more favorably with the grass and result in better establishment.

Fall is not the time to relax grazing management. It is a critical time for the plant to build carbohydrate reserves. Good grazing management in the fall is the first step to more grass growth and better grazing conditions.

## Sheep and other Small Ruminants

I have been committed to having a diverse program here in the county that includes most livestock. With that in mind, I started with the beef cattle and the AMW Cattlemen's Association. I recently reached out to those on my mailing list to find producers raising sheep. I am continuing to build contacts and add to my list. So, if you know of anyone, please let me know.

In the meantime, I am also searching for those raising goats, both meat and dairy. My goal is to find out what type of production we have out there and the needs for helping make our herds and flocks more productive and more profitable. So far, I have heard back from a few producers about programs that would help their operations. Two items have come up:

- Pasture and grazing management
- Getting together to make contacts and share info

If these are the only things holding us back, then great. We should be able to tackle those over the next year and see a boom in our small ruminant production. However, if there are other issues. Then I need to know so that these can be addressed.



### Free BQA Training

Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc. (BIVI) will once again be partnering with the Beef Quality Assurance program (BQA) to offer free BQA training through the online training platform housed at the Beef Cattle Institute. Starting today, Wednesday, September 15th, the Fall Campaign for free online BQA training begins and runs until November 20th.

By completing the program and maintaining certification, the BQA program helps increase consumer confidence in the beef industry by demonstrating that the cattlemen strive to produce a safe and wholesome product. Whether you are a cow-calf producer, dairyman, stocker, or feedlot operator, each segment of the industry can benefit from the BQA training.

Find details for becoming BQA certified compliments of BIVI at <http://www.bqa.org/team.aspx>





**THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY**

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,  
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

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brown.6000@osu.edu  
athens.osu.edu

CFAES provides research and related educational programs to clientele on a nondiscriminatory basis. For more information: <http://go.osu.edu/cfaesdiversity>.

## The Last Word

As we are heading into fall, things are really starting to pick up: many groups are meeting to start planning for spring programs, fall breeding is getting underway and planting cover crops has begun. It seems that folks have become aware that there is a race to get everything done before winter hits. Others see things winding down and waiting for the cool, crisp fall days with leaves changing and taking a break from tending the garden. Whatever your state of mind, remember that fall always seems to happen about this time of year and the leaves will most likely fall off of the trees and no matter whether we are ready or not, fall will get here. Enjoy the season, get done what you can and don't sweat the small stuff. I am predicting that winter will be the next to show up.



*Enjoying a walk in the leaves*