Extending the Grazing Season

Carl Majewski
Stockpiling

• Reserving growth for fall grazing

• Less expensive, higher quality than feeding stored forages
What the Literature Says

• 1-1.5tons DM/A after frost

• Allow 75 days growth

• Topdress 50# nitrogen

• Tall fescue, orchardgrass best
• “Planning, timing, and luck”

• Highly dependent on weather, esp rainfall

• Reduced yields, quality over winter

• Animals don’t graze through deep snow or ice crusts
## Forage Quality

<table>
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<th>Mid-November&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Early December&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Late December&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Avg hay quality&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Avg pasture&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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<td>64.6</td>
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<td>34.0</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<sup>1</sup> Mata-Padrino et al. 2015. Agron J. 107:1048-1054

<sup>2</sup>DairyOne Interactive Feed Composition Library
Effect of N Fertilization

Does Stockpiling Affect Spring Growth?

- Grazing after dormancy doesn’t deplete CHO reserves
- Treading may increase winter injury
- Tillering, encroaching weeds?

- Keep residence under 7d
- Maintain 3-4” residue
- Avoid excessively wet areas
- Use sacrifice paddock, feed hay until ground freezes?
What the Farmers Say

- Make sure you have the land base to set aside
- Make sure they’re accessible, with available water
- Forage quality is good until Thanksgiving, then declines
- Better out of public view
- Plan for effective strip grazing
Stockpiling Math

- Assume:
  - Flock of 30 cattle, 25# DMI/day
  - 20 acres available
  - 1.2 tons DM/A stockpiled
  - 75% utilization

- 25 x 30 = 750# DM/day

- 20A x 1.2T x 2000#/T = 48,000#
  48,000 x 0.75 = 36,000# available

- 36,000#/750# = 48 days

- 750# x 90d = 67,500# DM
  67,500/1800 = 38A required
Challenges with Overseeding Pastures

• Limited growing season in the Northeast

• Healthy pastures compete with seedlings

• Annuals require earlier seeding date

• Fall growth comes at the expense of summer forage
CSF Winter Cover Crop Planting Scheduler

Current Location:
83 Ingersoll Grove,
Springfield, MA 01109
Lat/Lon: 42.12, -72.58
Change Location

Cover Crop
Mustard

Probability of biomass > 1.5 tons/acre before hard freeze (Mustard)
Planting Date: 08/29

GDDs (base 32) from planting date (08/29) through hard freeze

CSF Winter Cover Crop Planting Scheduler

Current Location:
83 Ingersoll Grove,
Springfield, MA 01109
Lat/Lon: 42.12, -72.58

Cover Crop
Rye

Probability of cover crop establishment before end of season (Rye)
Planting Date: 10/09

GDDs (base 42) from planting date (10/09) through end of season

Still Want to Try It?

- Reserve for weakest pastures
- Suppress existing growth – herbicides or HARD overgrazing – in July
- Use drill to get precise seed placement
- Seed Brassicas by early August, cereal grains by mid-late August
- Don’t have it as your only plan
Extending the Grazing Season

• May be better to work with what you have

• Plan ahead – DM needs, alternatives, etc?

• Overseeding is not the time for half measures!