SEEDED BERMUDAGRASS FOR SWINE WASTE SPRAYFIELDS

By Amy Andrews-Livestock Agent, Craven & Jones Counties, Information compiled from issue Paper: RYE Values for Superior Lines of Seeded Bermudagrass: from the NC Interagency Nutrient Management Committee

Historically, seeded Bermudagrass varieties have often failed to maintain yield and vegetative character over time, and stands have tended to become dominated by the unproductive common ecotype. Older varieties often contained common and/or Giant Bermudagrass (or originated from Giant) and are not persistent in NC. For that reason, seeded types have previously been assigned to the same yield group and allowed the same plant available nitrogen (PAN) rate as Common Bermudagrass, and were allowed 75% of the PAN that hybrids were allowed on a given soil map unit.

In recent years, however, new pure seed lines and pure seed line blends have been observed to maintain vegetative character and yield for much longer periods. Data from several southern states suggests that certain lines of seeded Bermudagrass have long term yield potential comparable to hybrids. The INMC recommends that pure line varieties and blends of these varieties of seeded-type bermudagrass now be allowed the same RYE and PAN rates as hybrid Bermudagrass varieties.

To ensure that vegetative character and yields are sustainable through the life of a nutrient management/waste utilization plan, only proven varieties should receive hybrid PAN rates. Qualifying varieties and mixtures:

1) Varieties and blends of varieties are of known origin.
2) Varieties are not selections of Giant or Common Bermudagrass.
3) Blends do not contain either Giant or Common Bermudagrass seed.
4) Varieties and blends have been tested by universities or other public institutions and observed to maintain yields comparable to hybrids over several years.

Producers intending to sow Bermudagrass for nutrient management/waste application should research and document the background of any seeded variety. Assistance in identifying superior lines can be obtained from Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Cooperative Extension, and NCDA&CS regional agronomists.

The establishment of seeded Bermudagrass varieties containing Common or Giant is discouraged, but those varieties may also be sown and utilized in nutrient management plans using the existing yield and PAN rate for Common Bermudagrass (75% of hybrid rate).
As we all work to recover from the drought, it’s important to keep body condition in mind and be familiar with how to assess your herd’s situation. Knowing who is in condition and who is not can be critical to getting does bred and to raising young, nursing kids that are born this spring, whichever may be your situation. Body condition refers specifically to how “fleshy” an animal is, and a scoring system is set up for all species of livestock. The goat scoring system is based on a 1 to 9 point scale, which was adopted from the beef system in North Carolina. Basically, 1-3 is regarded as thin, 4-6 is moderate, and 7-9 is fat. It’s as simple as that. If your goats are in the 1-3 range, they need to gain weight. If they are 8-9 scores, they are too fat. Most of the time, 4-7 scores are preferred. Just before the breeding season, does should be a 5-6 score to maximize the number of kids born. At the same time, does in late gestation should not be over-conditioned, such as a score of 7 or more, due to the incidence of kidding difficulties the excess fat can cause by dystocia (difficult birthing) and ketosis (pregnancy toxemia).

So how do you score an animal? Especially in the winter when hair coats are long it is preferred to feel the animal rather than just visually score them. Areas to feel and assess are the ribs, either side of the spine, the shoulders, hooks, pin bones and the tail head. Animals in good condition will be smooth looking and feeling, unlike the angular appearance of a thin animal. The ribs and backbone can be felt under pressure, but should have a smooth covering, and certainly not be visible.

Use the following score chart to monitor body condition of your goats, and feel free to contact your extension agent for additional assistance in scoring:

**BCS 1:** Extremely thin and weak, near death

**BCS 2:** Extremely thin but not weak

**BCS 3:** Very thin. All ribs are visible. Backbone is prominent and very sharp. No Fat cover is felt and some muscle wasting has occurred.

**BCS 4:** Slightly thin. Most ribs are visible. Backbone is sharp. Individual vertebrae can be felt.

**BCS 5:** Moderate. Backbone felt but is smooth.

**BCS 6:** Good. Smooth look with ribs not very visible. Backbone smooth and round. Individual vertebrae very smooth, felt with considerable pressure.

**BCS 7:** Fat. Ribs not visible, backbone felt under firm pressure.

**BCS 8:** Obese. Animal is very fat with backbone difficult to feel at all. Ribs cannot be felt. Animal has blocky, obese appearance.

**BCS 9:** Extremely obese. Similar to an 8, but more exaggerated. Animal has deep patchy fat over the entire body.

**IT’S BERMUDAGRASS SEASON!**

Emily M. Adams – Livestock Agent, Onslow County

With the harsh conditions of the drought affecting our warm season grasses last year, it may be necessary to replant or renovate existing warm season pasture grasses. The amount of damage your pastures sustained will depend on the amount of rainfall your area received and how heavily those particular pastures were grazed or stressed. Weed competition may also become a problem this year since pasture stands may have been weakened last year, allowing weeds to become more prevalent.

If you find that you will need to re-establish your bermudagrass this year, you have several options to consider. The method you choose will depend on your overall goal. If you are interested in establishing any of the hybrid varieties of bermudagrass such as Coastal or any of the Tifton varieties, you will need to have the bermudagrass sprigged. A certified sprigger who will bring the sprigs to
your farm usually does this. Over the long run, the hybrid varieties will probably be a little more productive than the “common” varieties of bermudagrass but sprigging bermudagrass can cost anywhere from $100-150 an acre depending on the cost of the sprigs. Sprigging is best done in February or March while the sprigs are still dormant.

A method of planting bermudagrass that is becoming quite popular is using a seeded variety, such as Wrangler or Cheyenne. These varieties work well in pastures and are fairly easy to establish. It may cost you roughly $50-75 per acre, depending on the cost of seed, to establish one of these varieties so it is a cheaper route to go when establishing a pasture. The seeded varieties can be planted beginning in April after the danger of frost has passed (soil temperature should be 65 degrees) and as late as the end of June.

Before replanting any type of grass, it’s important to take a soil sample and find out how much lime and fertilizer your soil may need. Bermudagrass prefers a soil pH around 6.0 so if your soil has a higher or lower level of acidity then your grass may not do as well as it should. A common mistake made when seeding bermudagrass is planting the seed too deep. Bermudagrass seed should be planted at a depth of 1/8” and no deeper than 1/4”. The best way to achieve this is to broadcast the seed and then lightly drag the field or use a cultipacker. You just want to put enough soil around the seeds to protect them.

When establishing a new pasture for grazing, the longer you can keep your animals off of it the better chance the grass will have to get established. Wait until the grass is 8-10” tall before turning any animals on it for grazing. For more information on planting bermudagrass, contact your local Extension office.

AVOID CALVING MISTAKES
Submitted by Eve H. Honeycutt, Livestock Agent, Lenoir and Greene Counties.

When a cow goes into labor, it’s usually best to let nature take its course and stay out of the way. Sometimes, however, cows and heifers need assistance—just make sure it’s the right kind of help.

Howard Tyler, a dairy scientist at Iowa State University, and Frank Garry, a veterinarian at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital at Colorado State University, point out practices still used on some farms that are actually detrimental to the cow or calf during calving.

- Do not use sawdust as bedding in calving areas. Calves can inhale the sawdust, potentially damaging their lungs. Straw is the better choice if you put animals into calving pens.
- Avoid moving cows and heifers multiple times during labor. Research shows that moving cows once they progress to stage 2 labor—when the water bag is showing—can add significant time to the labor process because the cow or heifer stops labor to explore her new surroundings. Instead, move her at the first signs of stage 1 labor or earlier.
- Do not rupture the water bag. Contrary to popular belief, rupturing the water bag does not speed up the calving process.
- Do not use soap and water as a lubricant. Soap removes the animal’s natural lubricants in the birth canal. You should only use commercial lubricants designed for this purpose when necessary.
- Avoid pulling unless the cow is pushing. Only pull when the cow pushes and hold the position when she rests so the calf does not slip back in. This helps maintain pressure on the cervix and speeds dilation.
- Stop pulling once the last rib is delivered. This allows time for the transfer of blood from the placenta to the calf prior to umbilical rupture. It also allows some fluids to drain from the nasal cavity and for the calf to take its first breath. Rotate the hips 45 degrees and the rest of the body will deliver on its own.
- Do not hang a calf upside down or
swing it to clear fluids. This does not clear fluids from the lungs, but instead compresses the digestive organs against the diaphragm making it more difficult for the calf to take its first breath. Instead, sit the calf sternally and elevate a bit to help drain fluids from the nose.

Forage Management Tips

March

- Apply nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium to cool-season grasses to increase spring production.
- Begin grazing of fall-planted fescue and clovers when growth reaches 6 inches.
- Overseeding ladino clover into grass pastures should be completed early.
- Spread manure accumulated in pastures where hay was fed or where cattle congregated during the winter.
- Dig weed-free bermudagrass springs and plant them before growth begins; consider using a herbicide.
- Consider controlling winter weeds (ex: henbit, hairy buttercup, etc) with herbicides.
- Grass tetany may be a problem as rapid grass growth and cool, wet weather prevails.

April

- Fertilize cool-season grasses if you have not already done so.
- Watch for symptoms of grass tetany. Winter annual pastures should be completely used before grazing pastures that will be harvested as hay.
- To maintain clover in grass pastures and to maintain quality, develop a rotational grazing system in which cattle can graze forage to a 2-inch height before moving to another pasture.
- Fertilize warm-season grasses as soon as dormancy breaks.

Upcoming Events

MARCH

- March 14 – CEFS Chicken Workshop – Goldsboro
- March 24-25 – Coastal Plains Livestock Show & Sale - Kinston

APRIL

- April 16 – CEFS Goat Management & Workshop – Goldsboro

This site contains the same information found in the guide and has been produced to offer assistance in dealing with natural disasters. If you would like a printed copy of the guide, contact your local North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service Center.

Sincerely,

Emily M. Adams
Agricultural Extension Agent

“HELPING PEOPLE PUT KNOWLEDGE TO WORK”
EXTENSION VOLUNTEERS RECOGNIZED

On January 29th, 4-H recognized Denise Humphrey as the 4-H Volunteer Leader of the year. Along with Mrs. Humphrey all 4-H volunteers were thanked and recognized for the years of service at the annual 4-H Volunteer Leaders Banquet. The theme this year was “Up, Up and Away…With 4-H Leadership.”

The annual Onslow County Agricultural Awards Banquet was held on February 5th at the Onslow Multipurpose Complex. Recognition was given to the various groups of volunteers that give of themselves to support and expand the work of the NC Cooperative Extension Service here in Onslow County. During 2007, Onslow County Master Gardeners volunteered 2,600 hours of service to local citizens. Special recognition was given to Pat Gray for 500 hours of volunteer time. Special recognition was also given to Leona Lilley, who were named the 2007 Master Gardener Volunteers of the Year for her devotion to increasing the knowledge level of other master gardeners and the public.

Several local farmers received awards for crop production contests:
- Corn Yield Champion: George Pierce with 247.3 bushels per acre. Corn Yield Runner-up: Franklin Riggs with 230.46 bushels per acre.
- Wheat Yield Champion: George Davis and Stuart Howard with 66.5 bushels per acre.
- George Pierce was the runner-up for the Southeastern Coastal Plains Region. Overall, George placed 25th in the state out of 211 entries.

The Onslow County Agricultural Hall of Fame award was begun in 1984. The nominee can only be inducted to the Agricultural Hall of Fame once, as either a recipient of the Master Farmer Award or the James R. Strickland Service to Agriculture Award.

This year's inductee was:
- Master Farmer Award: Mr. Gary Hardison.

The event started off with a memorial to ECA members and Ed Cole, former Onslow County Clerk of Court that had passed away since the last Achievement Day.

Several members were recognized for special awards. They are as follows:
- Perfect Attendance – 15 members were recognized for attending all of the club's monthly meetings.
- Reading Certificates – 6 members were recognized for reading a total of 56 books and submitting book reports of all books read. Kathy Cook was recognized for reading a total of 30 books. The Onslow County Public Library recognized the following ladies for their book reports: First Place – Gloria Wiley; Second Place – Donna Williams; Third Place – Sue Janning; and Honorable Mention – Kathy Cook.
- Cofer Leader Program Award - Barbara Crossman received this award for a lesson she presented to her club. All clubs voted on a member that had presented information during the year. Judges then picked the overall winner from reports presented to them.
- Most Outstanding Club Member – The following members were recognized after being voted on by the club members as the club's outstanding member: Jean Ross – Harmony; Kathy Cook – Jacksonville; Donna Williams – Meadow View; and Barbara Nichols – Sneads Ferry.
- Most Outstanding Club – This award is voted on by judges after seeing all the work done by a club's members. This year's award was presented to the Meadow View Club.
- Extension and Community Associate of the Year – This award is given to an outstanding member that goes above and beyond the call of duty. This year's award was presented to Donna Williams.

Other awards were given by were not available at the time of this release.

For more information regarding the Extension and Community Association please call Peggie Garner at 455-5873.