

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Fall Forage Management

There's a lot going on in grass stands right now: drought stress and approaching dormancy to name a couple. It also means opportunities for exploring management strategies to give forages – and the animals they support – the best chance to do what we need them to do.

Matt and Marley Hamon are hosting our 2022 Tailgate Talk on Tuesday evening, September 13th at their farm northwest of Valley Falls so we can discuss such strategies. We'll discuss where grass stands are at right now as well as how to prepare for fall dormancy. NRCS Rangeland Management Specialist Dustin Schwandt and Meadowlark Extension District Livestock and Natural Resources Agent Ross Mosteller will hit on management now that can help forage stands and livestock as we head in to fall and winter.

For cover crop growers interested in the dual uses of covers for grazing *and* weed control, K-State Weed Science Graduate Student Lily Woitaszewski will present her work focused on the impact of pre-plant weed suppression when cover crops are grazed during the winter.

The Jefferson County Conservation District will sponsor a light meal beginning at 5:30 at the farm at 5557 190th Rd. northwest of Valley Falls (take K-16 Highway to Swabville Road then head north two and a half miles to 190th. Head west on 190th one-half mile to the Hamon Farm – watch for signs). Bring a lawn chair and spend the evening hearing some great information to help shore up your fall/winter forage resource.

To help with a meal count, please RSVP by Friday September 9th (flyer available at www.meadowlark.k-state.edu) by calling the Meadowlark Extension District Oskaloosa Office at (785-863-2212) or e-mailing me (dhallaue@ksu.edu) or Ross Mosteller at rmostell@ksu.edu. Hope to see you there!

Cool-Season Turf Fertilization

For most medium to high maintenance turfgrass stands, fertilizing two to three times a year is recommended. That first – and most important - fertilization window is September. Cool season turf grasses (fescue, Kentucky bluegrass...) are just about to enter their fall growth cycle as nighttime temperatures moderate and days shorten. This results in thickening turf stands from tillering (new shoots at the base of existing plants) or from the spread of underground rhizomes. Feeding stands now can offer huge benefits.

The application doesn't have to be heavy. Limit rates to one to one and a half pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet. Use a quick-release source of nitrogen (most sources in garden centers and department stores contain at least some of a quick-release source).

To determine if Phosphorous, Potassium, or lime applications are needed, consider a soil test. For less than \$15, samples can be submitted through any District Office for testing.

The *second* most important fertilization window is November. This application, also of one pound of actual nitrogen per thousand square feet, helps grass green up earlier next spring and provide the nutrients needed until summer.