

Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM25 – Stockpiling of forages to extend the grazing season

Louisiana Criteria

Stockpiling forage is simply allowing forage growth to accumulate in one season to use for grazing in a later season. During the spring and summer, stockpiling is seldom advantageous because forages become mature and poor quality. Forage maturity is delayed in late summer and fall by cooling temperatures and shorter days allowing accumulation of leafy, high quality forage. Many forages can be stockpiled for fall and winter grazing, but some work better than others. The most successful forages for stockpiling are bermudagrass and tall fescue.

Bermudagrass can be stockpiled for fall grazing and tall fescue can be stockpiled for winter grazing.

Warm Season (common, hybrid bermudagrass, bahia)

Date to stop grazing to stock pile is best done in August to September (depending on rainfall). This takes advantage of warm temperatures and allows time for growth accumulation before cool autumn night temperatures slow the grass growth. Remove old growth leaving a stubble height of 2-3 inches. Fertilize with 40-50 lbs. of actual N. Defer grazing for 2-3 months to allow fall growth to accumulate. Strip graze to reduce waste.

Cool Season (tall fescue)

Remove old spring and summer fescue growth from the pasture by late August, to leave a stubble height of 3 inches. Fertilize with 40-50 lbs of actual N. Exact fertilize dates (Sept) would coincide with deferral/rainfall. Defer grazing for 2-3 months to allow fall growth to accumulate. Strip graze to reduce waste.