West Virginia Pasture Management

Liming

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for W.Va. Grassland Limited Resource Farmer Program

What
Adding the necessary liming materials to the soil to enhance pasture plant
vigor and growth by reducing soil acidity (i.e., neutralizing acids in the soil).

Why
This practice will:
1. Increase availability of soil nutrients to the plant, particularly phosphorous.
2. Increase soil calcium (Ca) level
3. Increase pH
4. Lower the lime requirement
5. Lower erosion potential
6. Increase nitrogen fixing organism activity thus supplying more nitrogen for pasture plants.

How
Lime can be added as follows:
1. Hand shovel
2. Pull-behind tractor spreader
3. Three-point-hitch tractor spreader
4. Spreader truck--cyclone type
5. Spreader truck--blower type

Kinds of Lime
Liming materials may vary in their neutralizing value and how finely they are ground. For agricultural uses consider:
1. Finely ground agricultural limestone
2. Limestone that has a neutralizing value as close to 100 as possible.
   A value above 100 is a bonus.

Lime should be applied when soil test results indicate a need.

When
Lime can be applied any time when the ground is not frozen and/or when the terrain will permit machinery access and movement.

Best time is usually during the fall months when access to hillside fields is easier. It also allows time during the winter months to react with the soil and be available for the spring growing season.

Lime should be applied at least two to six months ahead of any fertilizer application. This reduces the risk of lime and fertilizer materials reacting with each other instead of the soil.

Where
Apply lime first to those soils that have greatest natural production potential. This can be determined from your local County Soil Survey which is available from your local SCS office.
Summary

Establish a liming program for your farm. Get your soil tested every two to three years.

Add lime according to your soil test results.

Lime soils with best production potential.

Where to Get Help

For more information about liming, contact your local office of the Soil Conservation Service or the West Virginia University Extension Service. They are listed in the telephone directory under "U.S. Government" and "West Virginia," respectively.