West Virginia Pasture Management

Seasonal Growth of Forage Species Mixture


Objective

To create an awareness of the seasonal growth of some of the common pasture species mixtures in West Virginia.

Introduction

A better understanding of the seasonal growths of different species mixtures will enable farmers to design a grazing plan that is optimal for that given farm.

Common Species Mixtures

1. Kentucky bluegrass/white clover
2. Orchardgrass/white clover
3. Tall fescue/white clover
4. Orchardgrass/red clover
5. Small grains/ryegrass
6. Red Clover
7. Sudangrass/sorghum/sudan/pearlmillet

Seasonal Growths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mixtures</th>
<th>Begins</th>
<th>Peaks</th>
<th>Declines</th>
<th>Peaks</th>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ky. bluegrass/wh.clover</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>July 15</td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Orch. grass/wh.clover</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Aug. 1</td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tall fescue/wh.clover</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Aug. 1</td>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Orchardgrass/red clover</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>July 15</td>
<td>Sept. 1</td>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sm.grains/ryegrass</td>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>May 15</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>June 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Red Clover</td>
<td>April 1</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>Nov. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Sudangrass etc.</td>
<td>June 1</td>
<td>Aug. 1</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>Sep.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why

An awareness of growth seasons for various mixtures will allow you to consider maximizing the use of growing forages rather than stored feedstuffs. Animals are the least expensive harvesters available to mankind. Lowering expenses usually leads to an increased income. Combining different mixtures may allow a longer grazing season and a shorter feeding season.

Summary

Different species mixtures sometimes have different growing seasons. Using one mixture to "fill the gap" of another mixture will allow a more consistent supply of forage as well as possibly lengthening the grazing season.
Where to Get Help

For more information on seasonal growth of forage species, 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.