

2019 Summer Annuals

Let's take a look at forage trends and discuss past successes and failures

Sorghum Sudangrass Is Versatile

Hay and Haylage



Grazing



Summer Annuals of 2019

Sorghum Sudangrass – Yields +/-8 ton per acre

- AS5201 – Standard and less expensive
- AS6201 – BMR-6 is more digestible but also more expensive

Sudangrass – BMR-6 Brachytic Dwarf is high yielding and much faster to dry down for hay (than sorghum sudangrass) but doubly expensive

Pearl Millet – Great for hay or grazing where your access control is less but lower yielding than others

Legumes and Summer Annuals

Legumes mixed with summer annuals give livestock a higher protein intake and better digestibility while saving us money on nitrogen fertilizer. Possibilities include:

- Forage Soybeans
- Cow Peas
- Sunn Hemp

Forage Sorghum of 2019

- AS7102 – BMR-6 Brachytic Dwarf is 85 days to harvest (after wheat?)
- AS7232 – BMR-6 Brachytic Dwarf is 95-100 days to harvest
- AS7401 – BMR-6 Brachytic Dwarf is 110 days to harvest

A dairy in NEMO reports more than 20 tons/acre year after year.

Prussic Acid and Nitrate Poisoning

Prussic Acid

- Wait until the plant is 24-30" tall to graze or hay
- Following a killing frost, wait 5-7 days to graze or hay
- Following a non-killing frost, wait 2 weeks to graze or hay

Nitrate Poisoning

- Avoid overapplication of nitrogen fertilizer (50 lbs max)
- If in a drought have the forage tested before baling hay or grazing

Chad's Successes

On May 27th of 2018 I planted 6 acres of Sorghum Sudangrass and 7 acres of Pearl Millet for 39 head of cattle. After 0.4" of rain the following day then another 0.4" 5 days later it was on!

- Grazing 1 – Began 6/27 and ended on 7/21
- Grazing 2 – Began 8/1 and ended on 8/15
- Grazing 3 – Began 8/27 and ended on 9/7
- Grazing 4 – Began 9/22 and ended early on 10/2 to plant fall mix
- Grazed summer annuals 60 out of 97 days when pastures were bad
- One of few in NoMO who didn't feed hay and didn't sell cattle

Chad's Failures

I should've bought more cattle in fall because I have more stockpiled grass this winter than I have cattle to eat it.

Notes From Chad's Experience in 2018

- Summer annuals are extremely efficient with water
- Little N is needed at planting
- Subsequent N is not needed when grazing summer annuals
- Graze or hay as early as possible
- Plant on May 15 or when ground surface hits 60 degrees
- Include a legume for N and forage quality
- Leave 8-10" of stem when grazing and cut hay as high as possible.