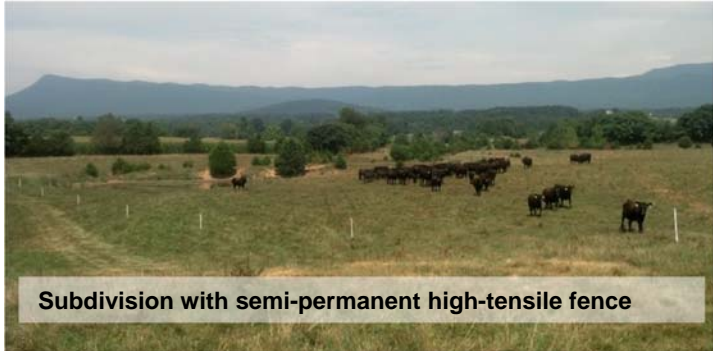


Fencing From Front Page

by broken insulators or insulators made of inferior materials that may lose current to a metal post. Flexible posts allow the fence to move with impact or pressure from livestock,



Subdivision with semi-permanent high-tensile fence

wildlife, and fallen tree limbs. The following options are some that we evaluated.

G2 PolyPosts by Powerflex Fence are a hollow post made of a blend of polypropylene, resin, and UV stabilizers. They are self-insulating, very fliexible with good memory as well as great strength and rigidity. Available in lengths from 4-6 feet and 1 1/3" or 2 3/8" in diameter, they are comparable in price to a metal T-post of equal length. Resistance to pullout is excellent and much better than a hard fiberglass post. The PolyPost can be installed by making a pilot hole to the desired depth and then driving the post in with a manual post driver. With a pilot hole, posts can be installed by hand even in rocky ground. Producers desiring a more permanent installation should place posts to a depth of 18", otherwise 12" is fine. Once installed, holes are easily field-drilled in the posts at the desired height for the wires. A cot-



Pilot driver "hammers" both in & back out



PolyPost & wire attached with cotter pin

(powerflexfence.com, 888-251-3934) or through one of their distributors.

Oil field sucker rods have been repurposed for many years as fence posts. While steel versions still exist, fiberglass sucker rod posts are now available and offer another non-conductive option for semi-permanent fencing. These posts are very strong and work well as a regular line post or boss post where needed. The type that we have tried runs 1.2" in diameter, 5-6 feet long, with pre-drilled holes for attaching wire. We have found them to be very economical.

While not treated for UV protection, they do not seem to splinter readily. These posts can also be driven by hand if a pilot hole is made. Visit the Twin Mountain Fence Company web-site or contact them at 1-800-527-0990 for more information on availability in your area.



Timeless fence posts are a plastic T-post manufactured by Plastic Innovation. Made of recycled materials, they contain a non-conductive, rigid PVC core and a protective UV coating. A lifetime warranty on materials



and a 20- year guarantee on the white UV coating is advertised. They are available in a 1.5" or 1.75" T-profile and lengths from 4-8 feet long. They are pre-drilled every 3 inches of their length and work best if you plan to run the high tensile wire, or electric poly braid directly through the holes, but can also be attached using standard T-post clips. These posts are very flexible yet strong, and so are sturdy enough for woven wire as well. They should be installed by first making a pilot hole with a drill and wood boring auger bit or pilot driver. Timeless fence is sold through authorized sellers, a list of which can be found at their website (plastic-innovation.com) or by calling 1-800-788-4709.

Drive-in fiberglass posts are widely available, inexpensive, and commonly used. One of the largest manufacturers of fiberglass posts is Geotek (aka: AFC, Common Sense Fence), which markets through numerous distributors such as Kencove Farm Supplies. Since fiberglass tends to splinter over time, many are treated with a plastic or UV protectant coating to help minimize splintering. For example, in the case of Geotek posts you may see this coating marketed as SunGuard®. Fiberglass posts are

available in many diameters and lengths that work well alone or in combination with other types. Numerous plastic and metal clips and snaps are available for attaching high tensile wire. Posts are also available pre-drilled for use with a cotter pin to attach wire. Although these posts are strong and work well, they can be difficult to drive in rocky ground and their resistance to pullout is not great.



Pasture Pro posts are manufactured by PasturePro Fence from a wood/plastic composite. They are self-insulating, strong, and flexible. Rigidity and memory after flexing are not as good as the Polyflex posts; sometimes posts with a lot of pressure on them become permanently bowed. Resistance to pullout is excellent and better than a hard fiberglass post. Pasture Pro posts are available in lengths from 4-7 feet and also come in several diameters and colors. They are comparable in price to metal T-post. These posts can be easily installed by first making a pilot hole and then driving with a hand held post driver. Holes can be made in the posts easily with a cordless drill and wire attached with a cotter pin. PasturePro posts are available directly through Kencove Farm Fence Supplies online (kencove.com) or through distributors; check with local fence product retailers in your area.



Bracing Alternatives to the traditional wood post H-brace exist which may prove useful in semi-permanent scenarios. These braces offer the advantages of being quicker/easier to install (particularly in rocky ground), less expensive, and more easily disassembled than a wooden H-brace. A bed log brace is used to resist movement of a single-post brace. To install a bed log brace,



Bed log brace

dig a trench on the inside of the post (side of post that is being pulled) and bury a 12-18" long 2'x6' board touching the post and flush with the ground. The bed log need not be attached to the post, although some sources will suggest doing so to help frost heaving of posts. The bed log increases the surface area of soil that must be displaced in order to move the post. The bed log is best used where a little extra reinforcement is needed to combat side strain or with an end post for single or double strand high tensile fence.

The EZ End brace, marketed by Powerflex Fence (powerflexfence.com, 888-251-3934), is a fiberglass brace that fits into a metal frame which sets entirely above-ground. It is easily and quickly installed by hand without the use of large equipment.



Auger-type anchor

There is an offset piece at the corner of the frame, into which one of two types of ground anchors is attached. The first is a 24" long auger-style anchor that is drilled into the ground using a standard socket; the second is a rock-anchor, which is comprised of two 24" steel rods that are driven in the ground at opposite angles. The auger-style anchor is best suited in textured soils, while the rock anchor works best in very rocky ground. This brace installs in minutes and is extremely strong and well suited for multiple wire fence. We found it to be a good fit in terrain where rocks, tree roots, etc. would have made driving or digging posts difficult. They are available in 3-and 4-foot heights.

The Wedge-Loc brace system uses a set of aluminum sockets and wedges to build a brace out of standard metal T-posts. Various options are available for building diagonal, H, or corner braces. These install very easily and university testing



Wedge-loc brace uses standard T-posts

has shown they can maintain tensile loads of up to 1,500 lbs. per brace. They are available through online retailers such as Kencove Farm Fence Supplies and NASCO Farm and Ranch, or

Give Grass the Agronomic Attention it Deserves

By: Richard I. Fitzgerald

In 2013, Headwater's SWCD was awarded a grant from private funders to increase outreach to promoting stream exclusion projects within three Sub-watersheds of Middle River- Edison Creek (PS01)-Bells Creek (PS04) -Moffetts Creek (PS05). From the start of the second year of this project, a brochure was developed describing to landowners a new approach to stream exclusion. The theme of this brochure is best titled as "Give Grass the Agronomic Attention it Deserves". Secondly, we accentuated the management flexibility allowed within the riparian buffers under this initiative, we stressed an effort to match grazing plans to existing infrastructure already on the farm, proposed cross-fencing to manage the existing grazing herd and then designed watering systems to provide an adequate supply of water. This focus shifted the attention onto the improved carrying capacity of the pasture, the increased weight gains on the calves and lower winter carrying costs for the cow/calf operation. We highlighted the most basic grazing system as one with at least three grazing pastures sized to the herd where the group is rotated through these units every 20-30 days.

The consideration of infrastructure needs beyond just the stream exclusion fence has resonated with landowners, particularly those with large tract boundaries and large herds of cattle. We tell the landowners to view the stream buffer fence as the first interior fence to provide better pasture management. Two other aspects of this project have been the personal contact and outreach to "100% of the landowners" and the increased flexibility allowed within the stream buffer with respect to maintenance, tree planting, etc. This project also offered some funding for project components that did not meet the requirements of Va. Cost-share BMP standards. These components were acquired from private funding groups such as the Aqua Fund and other members of the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network (CBFN). This initiative has also received funding through other CBFN members, including the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

One of the most notable components using private funds was to develop a portable solar powered watering unit, as well as an alarm system for permanent water troughs. VCE and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation built and demonstrated a reliable portable solar pumping system that farmers could use, especially to access remote pastures. Matt Booher, VCE-agent, also worked on an alarm system to warn farmers that their water troughs were not working using cell phone technology. The unreliability of cell phone service proved difficult to achieve success and needs more work with service providers. You can access the report on the portable solar system at; headwatersswcd.org

We targeted the largest landowners first while working on the outreach goal. They have continually expressed their desire for stream exclusion projects to:

1. Improve and utilize their existing water resource.
2. Allow control of invasive species in the riparian buffer.
3. Manage larger groups of animals with access to different pastures.
4. Provide ample water quantity to larger herds, especially during the summer.
5. Provide shade in each grazing unit.

The challenge for agency programs can be that each farm is a little different in designing a grazing system to marry the program requirements to the resources and attitudes of each farmer.

The Headwaters SWCD offered landowners technical assistance through a contracted agronomist that included:

1. Soil sampling and soils information to develop a nutrient management plan.
2. Farm inventories to gather information specific to the farm operation that would allow project proposals and cost estimates to be developed.
3. Marry infrastructure investment by absentee landowners by engaging tenants to utilize and maintain the grazing system through better lease agreements.
4. Grazing design must use existing fencing, soils, water resource, herd size, etc.

Several "first-time" participants acknowledged this assistance during follow-up visiting after project installation.

So where are we after three years? To date, we have 12 completed projects and three under construction that will improve conservation and water quality on more than 2,000 acres of pasture and hay land on farms with 125+ cow/calf pairs. These projects will provide stream exclusion for more than 5.59 actual miles with 7.8 miles of exclusion fencing. This represents a combined commitment of more than \$383,000 of cost-share and landowner funds, with another \$253,000 being scheduled. And 25% of the projects total in cross-fencing and other components. Using these projects as a representative pool, the average cost of excluding both sides of a stream will be \$125,000 per mile.

Richard I. Fitzgerald CPag Equity Ag- Headwaters SWCD contractor, vtagnuts@gmail.com

Wade Reiter Wins National Proficiency Award in Forage Production

At this year's National FFA Convention, Wade Reiter from Dinwiddie County, Virginia won the National Proficiency Award in Forage Production.

Wade S. Reiter of the Dinwiddie Senior FFA Chapter in Virginia works for his family farming operation. His jobs include assisting with cutting and baling hay, loading wagons, and stacking hay in the barn. He's responsible for checking the hay in order to cut it at the proper stage, as well as observing weather reports. The hay is sold to local livestock and horse owners, in addition to local retailers and larger accounts, such as Southern States. Reiter is supported by his parents, Naomi and James, and his FFA advisors, Cindy Blaha and Laurel Bishop. This award is sponsored by the National FFA Foundation and the National FFA Organization.

Upcoming Events

AFGC 2017 Annual Conference
January 22-24, 2017
Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center-
Roanoke, VA
www.afgc.org

National Goat Conference
February 17-19, 2017
Kellogg Center
Tuskegee, AL
mklein@vsu.edu

To JOIN the *Virginia Forage and Grassland Council* a membership form can be found on the web at <http://www.vaforges.org> or Contact Margaret Kenny at vfgcforages@gmail.com or call 434-292-5331

Corporate Sponsors

Augusta Cooperative Farm Bureau, Inc.
540/885-1265

Culpeper Farmers Coop., Inc.
540/825-2200

Dow AgroSciences
Jeff Clark
615-295-9620

Pennington Seed, Inc.
Elizabeth Yarber
434-321-2373

Piedmont Environmental
540-347-2334

Recyc Systems, Inc.
Susan Trambo
800/352-3261

Seedway
Scott Rushe
814-280-2451

Southern State Cooperative, Inc.
800/584-6556

Stay-Tuff Fence Mfg., Inc.
Lewis Sapp
336/918-7236

VIRGINIA FORAGE AND GRASSLAND COUNCIL
2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

INDUSTRY	AGENCY
Marnie Caldwell Rockbridge Coop. 645 Waddell St. Lexington, VA 24450	Carrie Swanson VCE-Albemarle County 460 Stagecoach Rd Charlottesville, VA 22902
Brian Jones Pioneer Hi-Bred Int'l 53 LeHigh Rd Craigsville, VA 24430	Jim Tate 15234 Old Ridge Road Beaverdam, VA 23015
Butch Johns SeedWay 28642 E Prince Edward Hwy Burkeville, VA 23922	Matt Booher Augusta County Extension Office P. O. Box 590 Verona, VA 24482
Earnie Dodson CFC Farm & Home PO Box 2002 Culpeper, VA 22701	J. B. Daniel NRCS-Forage and Grassland 100-D Dominion Drive Farmville, VA 23901
Richard Fitzgerald Equity Ag, Agronomist 345 McKinley Road Middlebrook, VA 24459	Mike Phillips NRCS Conservation Tech. 9578 Brady Lane Harrisonburg, VA 22802
Zach Wampler Augusta Coop Farm Bureau Staunton, VA	Alston Horn Chesapeake Bay Foundation 524 Freemason Run Road Mt. Solon, VA 22843
PRODUCER Patty Johnson 25325 Old Office Rd Culpeper, VA 22701	TREASURER AND REGISTERED AGENT David Fiske 128 McCormick Farm Circle Raphine, VA 24472
Jon Repair (President) Rainbow Ridge farm 731 Tinkerville Road Glasgow, VA 24555	EDUCATIONAL ADVISORS Dr. Gordon Groover AAEC Dept. (0401) Virginia Tech Blacksburg, VA 24061
Terry Slusher 1956 Rush Fork Rd, SW Floyd, VA 24091	Dr. Ben Tracy 425-A Smyth Hall (0404) Virginia Tech Blacksburg, VA 24061
Danny Boyer 8784 Spring valley Rd Fries, VA 24330	Dr. John Fike 365 Smyth Hall Virginia Tech Blacksburg, VA 24061
Charlie Wootton Piedmont SWCD 100-B Dominion Dr. Farmville, VA 23901	Dr. Chris Teutsch SPAREC 2375 Darvills Road Blackstone, VA 23824
Miller Adams 855 Jones Store Road Red Oak, VA 23964	Dr. Vitalis Temu Virginia State University M.T. Carter Building Room 238 Petersburg, VA 23806
MANAGING EDITOR, VA FORAGER & ADMIN ASSISTANT Margaret J. Kenny 3599 Indian Oak Road Crewe, VA 23930	SECRETARY Dennis Jones 375 Mountain View Road Pamplin, VA 23958

on September 1, 2016 at McCormick Farm. Approximately 49 people attended this evening portion of the tour. David Fiske explained to the group that year in and year out, it has successfully worked in this system when he sets aside 20-25% of the grazing acres for summer stockpiling. Because it stockpiles from spring green-up until late-August, it is a long enough time frame to over compensate for a drought period during this time of the year. On average over the past 9 years, it has resulted in extending the total grazing season by an additional 60+ days compared to just feeding hay. This is accomplished with a total stocking rate of 2 acres of grazing land per cow/calf pair. The only way he accomplishes this is to strip-graze the cattle on the stockpile. They utilize the forage very efficiently to stretch those grazing days. Over the years David has not noticed any negative effects to the livestock from grazing summer stockpile.

Matt Booher and John Benner explained the results of their complimentary research project. Looking at forage quality and palatability, the crude protein and total digestible nutrients measured in early August would still meet the needs of brood cows in early lactation. It would fall a little short on growing cattle but that could be easily remedied with a little supplementation. Palatability has not been an issue. The dead stems and seed heads have deteriorated and vegetative tillers have grown out, resulting in a forage sward that is readily consumed under strip-grazing management. Comparative ergot alkaloid testing of the fescue show the levels being relatively the same as the neighboring pastures that were not set aside for summer stockpiling.

If this idea interests you, look for the full project results to be presented at the American Forage and Grassland Council National Meeting in Roanoke, VA, January 23-24, 2017. Additional popular press articles are expected to be published with final results over the winter.

Written by: J.B. Daniel, USDA-NRCS Grassland Agronomist

Winter Grazing and Feeding Tips for Horses

By: Bridgett McIntosh

While counting bales of hay and prepping for the winter months ahead, it is important to remember the role that pasture and forages play in horse health. Pastures can provide ideal nutrition and exercise for horses when managed properly, even through tough weather conditions. In fact, Virginia’s cool season pastures are so well suited to the winter months, it is quite possible for sugar levels to exceed tolerable levels for “easy keepers” prone to obesity and laminitis. The following tips will help keep horses and pastures healthy this winter:

- All horses require at least 1.5% of their bodyweight in forage per day (18 lb for a 1,200 lb horse) to maintain gastrointestinal health.
- Most mature nonworking and light working horses can be fed 2-2.5% of their bodyweight in forage per day (24

to 30 lb a 1,200 lb horse) along with a ration balancer (typically 1 lb per day) to meet their energy and nutrient requirements. Horses with elevated needs may require additional supplementation with commercial concentrates if forage quality is poor.

- At least two acres of pasture per horse are necessary to provide adequate forage for grazing. Cool season forages like tall fescue, Kentucky bluegrass and orchardgrass can remain a valuable source of nutrition through the winter months if managed properly and not overgrazed.
- Rotationally graze pastures to maintain plant height no less than 4 to 6”. Horses should be removed from pastures if a minimum plant height of 4” cannot be maintained.
- Horses should be in good flesh going into winter with a body condition score of 5 to 6 on a scale of 1 to 9 (Henneke et al., 1983). Ribs should not be visible, but easily felt.
- Pasture associated laminitis can occur in the winter months due to elevated sugar content in cool season grasses, especially in overweight horses. Predominantly Max Q tall fescue pastures at the Virginia Tech M.A.R.E. Center in Middleburg VA had sugar levels as high as 25% dry matter (DM) in January 2016!
- Periods of mild temperatures and sunny days followed by sharp drops in temperature can increase sugar accumulation in cool season pasture grasses. Horses at risk for laminitis should be monitored year-round for signs (increased digital pulse, lameness, reluctance to bear weight on front feet, cresty neck etc.) and removed from pasture. Low sugar hay (less than 10% DM) should be fed to meet forage requirements.
- Consider constructing a heavy use area (sacrifice lot, dry lot, loafing area etc.) to keep horses off of pasture and restrict grazing and access to pasture when necessary. The use of geotextile fabric layered with 3” of course rock topped with 6” of footing (ex. crushed limestone) will minimize mud and prevent erosion in the wet winter months.
- The adult horse requires at least 10 gallons of water per day. Water consumption is extremely important in the winter months when moisture levels in forages are lower.

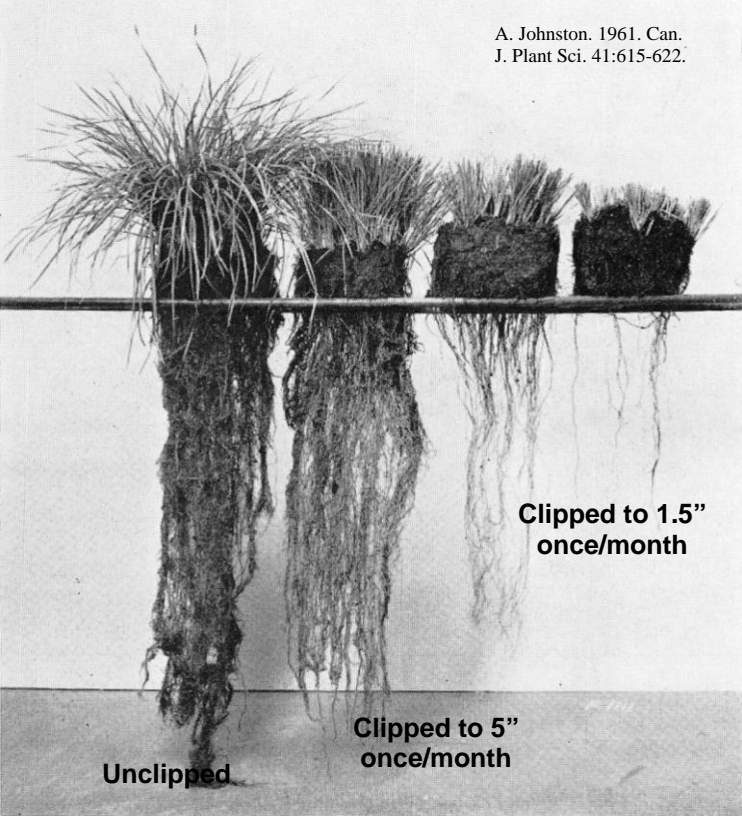
Horses are grazing animals that will eat up to 17 hours per day and travel up to 10 miles per day when housed on pasture. Management practices should strive to mimic the natural behavior of horses and consider the importance of grazing and forage intake even through the winter months.

Bridgett McIntosh is with the Virginia Tech MARE Center, Department of Animal & Poultry Sciences in Middleburg, VA.

Surely One More Bite Can’t Hurt, Can It?

By: Matt Booher

The image below is from a well-known study conducted about 50 years ago. For 3 years the researchers clipped rough fescue plants *once per month* to residual heights 5 inches, 3 inches, and 1.5 inches. They also compared these 3 defoliation heights with plants that had never been clipped.



As you can see from the photo, there is not too much practical difference in root mass between the plant that was never clipped and the plant clipped to a height of 5 inches. Likewise, it is easy to see the detrimental effects of clipping to a 1 ½ inch height. But those are not the points you should take away from this. What you should pay close attention to is the difference in root mass between the plant clipped to 5 inches versus 3 inches. Therein lies the biggest practical difference in root mass; the plant managed to a long-term grazing height of 5 inches has significantly more active roots for gathering water, scavenging nutrients, and supporting aboveground growth. The scary part is that the difference between the two management treatments is the difference between moving livestock to another field, or giving them one more day or so. How often do you let them have “just one more bite” because you are afraid of wasting grass? To play the devil’s advocate, I will concede that grasses are pretty forgiving, and that this study represents a long-term result. I also haven’t mentioned the important role of rest following grazing. I’m convinced though, that the process of root pruning from mismanagement happens quickly and can easily snowball, particularly when a farm is overstocked. The following photos are from a tall fescue bunch that I dug up and split into two plants. Initially, both



Initial plants Roots after clipping at 1” and 4”

plants had roots about 8” deep. I clipped one plant to a 4-inch height and the other to a 1-inch height. I repeated this one more time after a little regrowth and then allowed both plant to recover for about a month. You can clearly see that a big reduction in root depth and mass took place fairly quickly. I’m sure you are already thinking of all the impacts short- or long-term grazing height might have on everything from yield to drought tolerance to stand longevity. I’ll offer one more thought to those of you who are worried about “wasting” grass by moving livestock too soon. Forage availability (forage intake) is the number one driver of animal performance – even over the nutritional quality of the forage. The quantity and quality of forage in a pasture goes down with each day animals remain on it and there is research to show that animal performance starts dropping as early as three days in. Obviously we do not live in an ideal world, and our grazing management is going to be less than textbook at times. I think it is an important concept though, to remember the cost of “just one more bite”.

Matt Booher is with the Augusta County Extension Office and serves on the VFGC Council.



Your Range & Pasture Specialists



Update on Sericea Lespedeza Research

By Ben Tracy

After two years of preparation and establishment, we began our first year of data collection this May on a grazing trial involving sericea lespedeza. Yes, that’s right, sericea lespedeza - a plant viewed by many as weedy nuisance especially in western parts of the US. Nonetheless, we think sericea may have a place in our tall fescue-based grasslands. The utility of sericea as a forage has been explored by agronomists over the years mostly in the south where it is sometimes referred to as ‘poor man’s alfalfa’. In fact, sericea was the focus of a breeding program at Auburn University that produced several cultivars including a grazing tolerant variety called AU-Grazer that is commercially available today.

Serciea lespedeza is a perennial, warm-season legume. The plant is a rather short-statured, shrubby and highly drought tolerant. It is widely adaptable, growing best in warm to hot climates and thriving in many different soils. In fact, sericea seems to do best in more marginal soils, and this may be part of the reason it can be invasive in some situations. Serciea also contains chemical compounds called condensed tannins, which when consumed by livestock could produce some positive effects including: lower intestinal parasite loads, reduced methane production, protection against bloat, and better protein digestion. As I wrote previously in the Forager, we are especially interested in how tannins in Sericea might interact with tall fescue toxins as there is some evidence that the tannins could bind these toxins and render them less harmful to livestock. Our overall goal with this grazing trial is to see if we can create a highly stress tolerant pasture by combining tall fescue and sericea lespedeza. Ideally such a pasture will not only produce a stable forage base to combat weather variations, but possibly generate some positive health benefits to cattle as well.

To test this idea, we set up a grazing experiment at the Virginia Tech Shenandoah Valley research station in Steeles Tavern, Va. We established paddocks that contained toxic KY-31 tall fescue and non-toxic tall fescue in fall of 2014. Once established, we killed about 30% of the fescue paddocks the following spring with Roundup and planted sericea into the killed strips (Image 1).



Image 1. Sericea lespedeza strip planted into a tall fescue paddock. Sept 2015.

For comparison, we did the same using alfalfa in adjacent paddocks. We let the paddocks establish over 2015 and then starting grazing them in May 2016 using newly weaned steers. Sericea took a while to come on but was growing well by early June. Alfalfa established well and definitely was preferred by the steers. We did not know how the steers would respond to the sericea, but as time went on some interesting trends were noticed. For one thing, the steers were clearly eating more Sericea when paired with the toxic K-31 fescue compared with sericea paired with non-toxic fescue (Image 2). We can only speculate on why



Image 2. Sericea lespedeza in toxic fescue plot (left) and in a paddock with non-toxic fescue (right). Sericea in non-toxic paddock was about 2 feet taller and barely touched by steers. Image from August 2016

this happened. One interesting hypothesis is that the steers might have been ‘self-medicating’ themselves by eating the sericea (and condensed tannins) to combat the toxic fescue. When grazing the non-toxic fescue, the steers maybe felt just fine so avoided the sericea. Weight gain data on the steers suggested that they did just as well on sericea as alfalfa when paired with toxic fescue, but the trends were not consistent this first year. Nonetheless, we are a long way from making any recommendations regarding use of sericea in tall fescue pastures, but we will be continuing this study for several more years. It will be interesting to see if these interesting trends continue and learn how sericea impacts cattle performance and the surrounding environment.

Ben Tracy is with Virginia Tech in the CSES Department and also serve as a educational advisor to the VFGC.

www.cfcfarmhome.com

Serving farmers, homeowners & contractors for 75 years

Complete agronomy technical support!

- ❖ Lime spreading
- ❖ Soil testing
- ❖ No till drill rental
- ❖ Fertilizer spreading – dry & liquid
- ❖ Chemical recommendations & application

- ❖ Dry/blend fertilizer
- ❖ Bag fertilizer
- ❖ Liquid nitrogen application
- ❖ Aerial spraying available

Culpeper	540-364-1533		Caroline	804-448-0266
Rappahannock	540-987-8555		Morrisville	540-439-3254
Marshall	540-364-1533		Warrenton	540-347-7100

Report of the 2017 VFGC Nominating Committee

In accordance with the by-laws of the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council, the nominating committee has put forth a candidate for each upcoming vacancy on the Board of Directors. All nominations received from the membership at large were considered and are included. VFGC members will receive a ballot by email, members that do not have email access will receive a postcard ballot by U.S. Mail. Pay special attention to the return deadline on each to assure your vote is counted.

Industry Representatives

Alex Weller Alex is a recent graduate of Virginia Tech with a degree in Agribusiness. He is currently employed as Beef Consultant with Cargill Animal Nutrition. Alex lives in Augusta County where he and his father also run an 80 brood cow Angus beef operation.

Patrick L. Burch Pat is a Field Scientist for Dow AgroSciences in Christiansburg, Virginia. Pat has worked for Dow AgroSciences for 31 years as a field scientist and as a technical resource to customers, cooperators and field sales. Responsibilities in this job have included herbicide research, stewardship and uses in vegetation management for range and pasture, rights-of way, forestry, aquatic habitats, invasive plant control and new product development.

Jacob Gilley Jacob lives in Madison Virginia with wife Jennifer, daughter Nora Grace, and son Tucker. He is a 2009 graduate of VA Tech majoring in Animal and Poultry Sciences and minoring in Ag Economics. He completed his Masters in Agriculture Education in 2010 and is employed full time as a field sales representative for CFC Farm and Home Center based out of Culpeper Virginia.. He and his wife also own and operate a commercial Angus herd of 20 fall calving cows in addition to JC Livestock Services, LLC a small livestock consulting/marketing company. They are proponents of rotational grazing and the use of winter and summer annuals. Jacob is on the Orange County Farm Bureau Board and working to develop a County Young Farmer group in Orange and surrounding counties.

Lane Grow Lane is a 1993 graduate of Virginia Tech with a BS in Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences. He served in agricultural missions in the Philippines for about 2 years training upland farmers in sustainable agricultural technology. For the past 8 years he worked for Rockbridge Farmers Co-op as a field representative working directly with producers on forage, crop and animal production. In January 2015 he began as regional agronomist with Southern States Cooperative. His territory includes most of Southwest Virginia. He works on all aspects of forage and crop production giving direction to employees as well as working directly with producers. He also works with extension agents on forage trials and takes care of a Southern States forage plot in Bedford Co. and lives with his family on a small farm in Rockbridge County.

Producer Nominees

Keith Tuck Keith farms in the Moneta community in southern Bedford County. He transitioned from tobacco production years ago and now owns and operates a commercial beef cattle operation of 100 cow calf pairs on a total of 250 acres between owned and rented land. Over the years Keith has excelled at grazing management by keeping his stocking rate at 2.5 acres per cow calf pair and implemented a stockpiling and strip grazing strategy to minimize winter hay feeding. Keith currently serves as a Chairman of Peaks of Otter SWCD, he also serves on the FSA County Committee, as a parent 4-H volunteer, co-chair of the County Fair Committee and he just finished serving on the Southern State Board.

Alan Spivey Alan and family own and operate On the Run Farm in Aroda, Virginia. They are graziers of cattle, horses and sheep. Alan is a farrier by trade and he has previously served as Director and President, Culpeper Ag. Industries (livestock market); Director and President, Virginia Simmental Association; Director and President, Virginia Cattlemen’s Association; Director, Virginia Horse Council and Director and President, Virginia Forage and Grassland Council.

Raymond Taylor
Director of
Sales and Marketing
Amory, MA 38821
Phone: 662-256-3511
Phone: 334-566-5144
Email: raymond@wax.ms

America’s # 1 Ryegrasses !

Marshall Jackson

Superior Varieties of Southern Peas

Top Pick Pinkeye
Top Pick Brown Crowder
Top Pick Cream

Augusta Co-Op

Staunton
(540)885-1265

Weyers Cave
(540)234-9275

Fairfield
(540)377-6798

Scottsville
(434)286-2850

Bedford
(434)546-0771

Your first source for forages!

- Experienced Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs) on staff to make agronomy recommendations
- Large selection of forage seeds in stock
- Bulk & bagged fertilizer
- Crop Protectants & Foliar Feeding products
- Application services for fertilizer & crop protectants
- Nutriscription™ nutrient recommendation service to better match forage nutrient requirements
- No till drill rental
- Fencing & watering supplies

www.augustacoop.com

President's Message



It has certainly been a unique year for agriculture and forage producers in Virginia. As always, weather takes the spotlight when it comes to production inputs and discussion. Have you ever taken notice that almost every conversation between those of us in agriculture generally starts in a detailed weather discussion and then, we move on to other issues of interest and importance. It always appears, or feels like when it comes to rainfall we are generally facing “Feast or Famine”.

Just as with the weather, we as producers at times, have witnessed firsthand the double edge sword of “Feast or Famine” when it comes to agricultural production and what we are confronted with on a daily basis. One area that stands out at times is the success of information transfer, as we seek scientific based information to assist in making sound production decisions. Since the year 2000 we have “Feasted” in the expertise, research findings, and teachings of Dr. Chris Teutsch and his willingness to work with all of us involved with forage production across the state of Virginia.

Dr. Chris Teutsch has garnered the respect and admiration of all forage producers who have come in contact with him. His ability to teach and explain the many complex concepts of forage growth and utilization in an understandable and useful fashion has been highly recognized and appreciated, by all that have experienced his knowledge and enthusiasm first hand. Chris has also expanded the knowledge base of forage producers across the state with his timely and beneficial research, and the information that has been gleaned from his commitment to cutting edge forage based research. His research efforts have continually been directed towards practical sustainability and excellence in forage production systems.

Chris has been a continual resilient spoke in the wheel of success of the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council. As an Educational Advisor, Chris has provided a perpetual energy and willingness to work with all the efforts of VFGC. His commitment has certainly enabled VFGC to be the Premier Forage and Grassland Council in the United States. He has brought many new ideas and concepts to the table as VFGC has moved in an ongoing positive direction in our support to Virginia forage producers with our educational program efforts.

Unfortunately, we will all find ourselves on the “Famine” side of this sword and Dr. Teutsch’s input and expertise beginning January 1, 2017. Chris has accepted a new position at the University of Kentucky as the Forage Extension Specialist for the state of Kentucky.

We can only hope that Virginia Tech will recognize immediately the need for someone of Dr. Teutsch’s expertise and experience to continue forward here in Virginia. Forage production is the second largest (Forestry is #1) acreage based agricultural commodity in Virginia. It is important that producers don’t feel this “Famine” for any extended period of time. We as forage producers need the continued research support, information transfer, and the knowledge base that Dr. Teutsch has so generously and tirelessly provided Virginia for the past sixteen years.

It is with great admiration that the Board of Directors of the Virginia Forage and Grassland Association, on behalf our entire membership, and all the forage producers of Virginia, thank you Chris, for everything you have done to help us to continually improve our forage production systems and our style of life. More importantly we appreciate the genuine friendship that you have provided to us all. We wish you and your entire family continued success and happiness with your move to Kentucky, and with your new position and efforts at the University of Kentucky!!

Until next time,

Solutions from Front Page

David Fiske, Superintendent of the Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Research and Extension Center at Steele’s Tavern, VA, had another idea. He said, “Why not use what we have and stockpile spring forage growth for late summer and fall grazing? Almost every year we have too much forage in May so we make hay out of it and then feed it later. What would happen if we just didn’t harvest it for hay, let it stand in the field until we needed it for August and September?” Well, conventional wisdom would quickly conclude that strategy would not work. Forage quality would drop drastically, palatability would decline and the livestock would not graze it. On top of that, pastures that were dominant with endophyte infected fescue, would naturally result in excessively high ergot alkaloid levels causing livestock to avoid this forage and perform poorly during

this period. Specialists would dismiss this option and say, “It just won’t work.” Sometimes that is all you need to say to get someone to try it!

David began “summer stockpiling” in 2007 with promising results. He has continued this with a spare herd of cattle on the back side of the farm and it has consistently provided a safety net of forage for grazing later in the summer when it was actually needed. Many still ask, “What about palatability, forage quality and the potential for fescue toxicosis?” Well, Matt Booher and John Benner, the Extension Agents in Augusta County, were awarded a small research grant from the Virginia Agriculture Council to specifically look at the feasibility of summer stockpiling and the impact of these forage quality concerns on resulting animal performance.

This strategy was highlighted on the VFGC Summer Forage Tour “Planning for Summer Drought”

Solutions Page 4

More on foxtail control

By: Matt Booher

In the last edition of *The Forager* I introduced the availability of several herbicides for controlling foxtail in hay and pasture. Here is a quick review before I jump into some of our findings from this year’s trials:



Quinclorac has been around a long time, typically used in the turf market. It is now available as ‘Facet L’ (a liquid formulation) and the generic ‘QuinStar’ (a dry flowable). There are others but to my knowledge these are the only ones currently labeled for hay and pasture. Quinclorac offers in-season preemergence and postemergence control of foxtails, as well as other summer annuals including fall panicum, crabgrass, barnyardgrass, and ragweed. Postemergence activity, however, is only effective on seedlings up to 3 or 4” tall. Even though most summer annual weeds like foxtail are not noticed until late in summer, they actually begin germinating around mid-May, although germination dates are highly dependent on shading and other microclimate effects at the soil surface. In addition to quinclorac, the pendimethalin ‘Prowl H2O’ label was changed last year to include use in pasture and hay. Pendimethalin is strictly a preemergent herbicide, meaning it will have no effect on weeds that have already germinated. Good ground coverage must be achieved to obtain effective preemergence activity, therefore restricting applications to early spring or after hay removal. It is also very dependent on rain soon after application in order for it to create an effective barrier to emerging weeds. All of these products can be used in hay being sold on the open market.

This year Doug Horn, (Rockingham Co. Extension) and I put out several foxtail control trials looking at various rates, timings and mixtures of these chemicals. While our research is ongoing, here is what we have learned up to this point:

1. We were most impressed with pendimethalin (‘Prowl H2O’) or quinclorac (‘Facet L’, ‘QuinStar’) applied right after a first cutting taken in late-May or early-June. A mixture of the two chemicals is a very effective combination giving longer control – if you can afford it. These options provided sufficient control of foxtail through our last evaluation of the trials in late-August. The specific rates would equate to:
1.5 lb. ai/acre rate (1.58 quarts/acre ‘Prowl H2O’) ai/acre (1 quart/acre ‘Facet L’)
2. Since many people will be interested in applying pendimethalin in early spring prior to hay or pasture growth, I should mention that we were not happy with the results of this timing - even with a high rate of pendimethalin. It just didn’t hold back the foxtail as long as needed.
3. Timing and scouting are critical to determine the best course of action. In fields with lots of bare spots, foxtail germinated in mid-May. In fields with good cover, and with good conditions for growing hay, germination was often delayed much later or never occurred. We used

fields with high foxtail pressure and we seeded Page 11
foxtail on top of that, so the variability among sites and conditions really stood out. I can now say with certainty that is it would be just about impossible to come up with a cookie cutter recipe for chemical foxtail control, you have to know each chemical’s limitations and go scout the field for seedling foxtail as soon as the hay is harvested. For example, after the first cutting is taken if there is no foxtail emerged you could probably spray with pendimethalin and get good results. If foxtail is present, shift to quinclorac or a tank mix of quinclorac+pendimethalin and wait about a week or so to allow more foxtail to emerge (quinclorac’s strength is more in postemergence control). Keep in mind that no matter how you choose to use pendimethalin, it must be incorporated by rain within a week in order to be effective. If no foxtail is emerged and you anticipate rapid hay regrowth that would quickly shade the ground, you may choose not to apply anything and get along just fine.

3. Injury to orchardgrass can occur with quinclorac. We saw this in our trials and in some commercially sprayed fields. It can vary from temporary yellowing of the leaves to outright killing the plants. Environmental conditions that would contribute to crop injury include: stressed orchardgrass (hot, dry, shallow soils), young or less well established plants, or hot application conditions. Additionally, the crop oil or methylated seed oil (MSO) that is required as a tank-mix partner to quinclorac contributes to the injury. You can’t just leave it out, however, or you will get no control of the foxtail. Liquid ammonium sulfate (AMS), often added to increase effectiveness, would add additional risk. Theoretically, choosing MSO instead of crop oil should reduce risk, as would the dry flowable formulation of quinclorac versus the petroleum-based liquid formulation. Also, applying before much regrowth of orchardgrass occurred would reduce the crops’ contact with the spray and should minimize injury. We saw one case where an entire field or of orchardgrass had been sprayed with “Facet L”, crop oil, and AMS in early-July just prior to some really hot, dry weather. The orchardgrass was young and half of the field was on a clay knob. The bottom half of the field looked fine but the half of the field on the clay knob was severely injured to completely dead. I think this is an extreme case where multiple things lined up to cause such severe injury, but if I had to make a recommendation I would probably not would choose not to apply quinclorac on orchardgrass much beyond mid-June unless I knew somehow that conditions would be cool and moist for several weeks.
4. Lastly, these chemicals are not cheap, so you have to evaluate their benefit. It is likely you will find that both ‘Prowl H2O’ and ‘Facet L’ are about \$40/acre each for the recommended rate of chemical, but the generics should run about half as much. The quinclorac requires a crop oil or methylated seed oil, which will add about \$4/acre. Of course you have to add in any custom application fees. Even using generics, at \$25/acre or more it is likely chemical foxtail control would only pencil out for most producers if they are managing for high-yield, multiple cutting hay sold at a premium.

Matt Booher is with the Augusta County Extension Office and serves on the VFGC Council.



VIRGINIA FORAGE AND GRASSLAND COUNCIL
3599 Indian Oak Road
Crewe, Virginia 23930



Fencing Page 7

through numerous dealers that can be found on the Wedge-Loc website.

By now you may be thinking “So you put up a fence – what’s the big deal?”. Effective, adaptable fencing is part of the foundation of good grazing management; alternative options allow producers to put up fence in situations where it may have previously been too costly or difficult to do so:

- Excluding or limiting access to riparian areas
- Grazing hayfields or crop aftermath
- Small or beginner operations
- Division/subdivision fencing or trunk lines
- Stockpiling pasture
- Flood-prone ground

Greater flexibility and control within a grazing system can lead to real benefits. For example, one of the producers we worked with is able to stockpile some fall pasture on rented ground for the first time thanks to the strategically placed subdivision fencing. The predicted feed cost savings from grazing the stockpile (using temporary electric fence run off of the new subdivision fence) should pay for the fence in the first year. Other examples include higher forage productivity, increased grazing efficiency, and healthier pastures. Take the time to explore alternative fencing options to manage your pastures for better forage and better livestock.

	Manufacturer/ distributor	Website	Telephone
G2 PolyPost	Powerflex Fence	powerflex-fence.com	888-251-3934
Pasture Pro Post	Kencove Fence	kencove.com	800-536-2683
Timeless Fence Post	Timeless Fence	plastic-innovation.com	800-788-4709
sucker rod post	Twin Mountain Fence	twinmountain-fence.com	800-527-0990
Sunguard fiber-glass post	Geotek	geotekinc.com	800-533-1680
EZ End brace	Powerflex Fence	powerflex-fence.com	888-251-3934
Wedge-Loc brace	Wedge- Loc	wedgeloc.com	800-669-7218
pilot driver & cotter pins	Kencove Fence	kencove.com	800-536-2683

No pasture too big or small

Whether you have a small pasture or large; horse, dairy or beef pasture; Southern States has the right forage seed, fertilizer and weed-control products to keep your pastures in top production.

Be more efficient with advice from a Southern States GrowMaster professional and let profitability become a result.

SOUTHERN STATES
Brands you trust. People who know.
www.southernstates.com

GROWMASTER

Your complete farm inputs partner

THE
VIRGINIA FORAGER

A publication of the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council



Volume 38 Number 1

Winter 2017

Alternative Fencing to Enhance Grazing Management

By: Matt Booher and Alston Horn

Fencing is often a limiting factor in managing pastures. Producers often point to cost, time and labor, difficult terrain, and short term land leases as disincentives to installing better fencing infrastructure. Semi-permanent, electric, high-tensile fence built with alternative posts and bracing can help overcome some of these challenges and offer options that are low-cost, easy to install, and moveable. Recently we reviewed some of the options through the construction of about two miles of fence on a couple farms here in the Shenandoah Valley. After a season of use, we’ve been impressed with the ease of installation and performance of the materials, and excited about the potential for managing pasture that semi-permanent fencing offers.

Posts

There are several options available for durable; self-insulating; and in some cases, flexible, posts for high-tensile fence systems. Their use is not widespread due to producers’ lack of familiarity with them, as well as confusion in differentiating between products of similar appearance. Many producers currently use steel t-posts in



constructing semi-permanent subdivision fencing. While alternative posts made of non-conductive materials may not differ in cost to steel posts, they possess several advantages over them. A non-conductive post is self-insulating and therefore does not require insulators, a cost savings and a guarantee against electrical shorts caused

Grazing Page 6

Defying Conventional Wisdom to Find Solutions for Graziers

By: J.B. Daniel

Everyone acknowledges the summer production slump that impacts our cool season pastures and livestock systems each year as temperatures rise and 90 degree days become normal by July. Cool season forages naturally do not utilize moisture efficiently or regrow well under these extreme heat conditions. This coupled with high stocking rates and even a moderate drought, can quickly result in forage shortages, summer hay feeding and pasture misuse and decline. I recall a wise grass farmer telling me in 2010, “I have never fed my way out of a drought and come out ahead economically.”

Good conservation planning in grazing systems requires contingency planning for times of the year when forage and feed shortages sometimes occur. There are different strategies commonly used to prepare for and successfully com-

pensate for these slump periods. First and foremost, everyone should have a stored hay supply to get through emergency short-term forages shortages. Some farmers have planned and successfully diversified forages in their overall pasture system and converted 15-20% of their pasture acres to warm season perennial grasses. Others have chosen to dedicate some pasture acres to annual forage production. They can double crop summer annual forages behind winter annual forages and provide a more constant supply of highly nutritious, fresh forage for grazing during the traditional “summer slump” period and during the transition seasons of early spring and late fall. Both of these options are viable alternatives with pros and cons for each.

Solutions 2

INSIDE THE VIRGINIA FORAGER

- Page 2...President’s Message

Page 3...Nominating Report

Page 4...Horse Feeding Tips

Page 5...Calendar
- Page 8....Grass Agronomic

Page 9....Fescue Plants

Page 10...Sericea Lespedeza

Page 11....Foxtail control

Reporting the progress of Virginia’s forage industry