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HAY PRODUCTION IN THE SOUTHEAST

Why Does it matter?

Due to growing conditions of forages in southeast, most livestock need to be supplemented with some type of feed source. Dry hay is the most cost effective source of supplement. Producing dry hay from surplus grass during favorable growing seasons allows farmers to stocker more cattle per acre on a yearly basis.

What was done?

Harvesting dry hay is the process of mowing grass, allowing to air dry to a low moisture (15 to 18 percent), then baling into a bale.

1. Timely applications of nitrogen in spring and fall to produce surplus forage
2. Mow surplus forage with mowing machine
3. Forages with larger stems need a conditioner on mowing machine
4. Use tedder or inverter to speed up drying process
5. Gather dry forage into windrow with hay rake
6. Bale dry forage into bale for storage

What was found?

With proper timing of nitrogen applications, surplus forage can be harvested off pastures to supplement livestock during slow growing seasons. Surplus forages can be harvested in April and August. Livestock will only need to be supplemented dry hay for about 60 days with stocking rates of 1.5 cows per acre. Pastures will produce two tons of excess forage per acre in spring.

What is the impact?

Farmer produces dry hay off existing pastures which allows for double cropping. Dry hay will be located at pastures where livestock is located reducing labor in hauling hay to livestock. Cleans excess residue off pastures allowing over-seeding to be more efficient. Reduced expenses from not buying supplements.

Research Team and Contact information

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