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 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
 David Dugan
 OSU Extension Educator, Agriculture and Natural Resources
 Adams/Brown/Highland Counties
 Ohio Valley Extension Education Research Area

Where are Your Cows?

For the biggest part of 2016 we have had plenty of moisture and the forage situation has been beyond good. In the past few weeks that has changed some. We have had some light rains for the most part, while a few areas have had flash flooding on occasion. Even the light showers help some on forages, but most of the 3 counties could use an all-day soaker for some continued growth of forages.

So with this later than normal dry period in the Ohio Valley in 2016, where are your cows or other livestock? Are they out on pasture? Pastures, like most lawns, continued to grow right through June, July and August. People were mowing lawns every 4 or 5 days right through the hottest and driest time of most years. Not until the end of August or into September did grass growth slow down. With this slow down, rotation of grazing animals has changed, too. This time of the year there is often little time for significant regrowth on most of our forages. So what are your cows doing to the forages where they are now?

Most everyone I talk to has plenty of hay in a bale. Most have said they have way more than normal. We have no idea what the next 6 months might bring weather wise. By the middle of March we should have a pretty good idea about how much hay we had to feed to get through the winter, but right now we do not know. So what do we know now?

We know we have more hay than normal and we have grass that has pretty much stopped growing due to a lack of rainfall, not temperatures. We also know we could have good growing conditions, if it rains, for another 2, 3 or even 4 or 5 weeks. We also know that those cows are not doing some of our forages any favors by eating them into the ground.

So if you have pasture ground that is getting over grazed, or other fields that have some regrowth at this stage of the growing season, should we graze it the last 2 weeks of September? Remember plants grow in part due to photosynthesis and that requires leaves and blades to take in the sun. Fields that are permitted to continue to grow for the next few weeks, without being grazed into the ground, will produce more forage than fields that continue to be grazed. This is true for the next few weeks or even months. Stockpiling forages at this point can pay dividends in November and into December. The other advantage is while that photosynthesis is taking place, the roots are building up reserves that will help them survive the winter and produce more forage next spring.

So, how can we allow these pastures to grow? Where do I put the cows now? Remember all of that hay? This is not a terrible time to feed some of it. Not only are you allowing growing forages to produce more total pounds of forage in the long run, but you are also feeding some of that hay during a time where you will most likely see much less waste at the feeder or ring. Dry conditions with little to no muddy conditions will see nearly all of the hay consumed by the animals. After all it is time consuming, and not cheap, to make hay. We might as well get as much feed out of a bale as we can, and let the grass recover a bit at the same time.



Lookout for Weeds While Harvesting

Harvest has started in the Tri-County area. Silage and tobacco have been going on for a while, but soybeans and corn are just about get into the swing of it. I have talked about the problem weeds off and on this summer, in pesticide re-certifications last winter and other times in this article or on the radio. Regardless of how much it is talked about, we can't do enough to stop the spread of some of these problem weeds that have resistance to many of our herbicides.

If you have clusters of weeds in your fields you may want to do a little additional scouting. See what is there in those areas to compete with the problem weeds and try to identify the weeds. The last thing anyone would want to do is run through a bunch of weeds that could spread like crazy over the next several acres. You would be better off skipping an area with mature weeds with seeds, especially if it would happen to be a weed like Palmer Amaranth.

Dates to Remember

Sept. 26 – Oct. 1 Brown Co. Fair