

FORAGER



Agronomics with livestock in mind!



In the Field – Fall Weed Management

Silage has been harvested and cornfields lay barren. In areas where rain has come, many fields are greening up with weed growth. Without crops, many producers do not consider weed control at this time of year. However, fall herbicide applications can provide excellent control of hardy perennials and winter annual weeds.

In the fall, perennials are building up root reserves for spring re-growth. Translocating nutrients to the roots will also help move systemic burndown herbicides (such as glyphosate) to the plants' roots. As a result, fall is the best time to kill weeds that spread from rhizomes (Example: quackgrass).

Winter annuals like chickweed can also be controlled at this time of year. This group of weeds (winter annuals) often goes unnoticed and is considered to be of little importance. But they can create some problems. Controlling winter annuals can help alleviate some insect and disease issues, especially in the spring. For example, black cutworms migrate to and lay eggs in weedy fields in early spring, which can then create problems for newly planted crops.

In fields where the weed problems were primarily summer annuals (like velvetleaf and lambsquarter), fall herbicide applications will not be a worthwhile investment. Consider the weed spectrum across fields before deciding whether or not to apply herbicide this fall.

Nutrition Depends on Agronomic Decisions

New forages are in the silo and nutritionists across the country are either praising or cursing the forages they will have to work with in coming months. The demand for a cheap ration is encouraging many producers to realize the importance of “**Superior Silage**”. Key agronomic decisions, like cropping plans and hybrid selections are more critical than many realize. High crude proteins in haylage and high NELs in corn silage should not be the only quality benchmarks used by producers and nutritionists, as they often are.

The fundamental factor to consider when selecting varieties is digestible NDF (*dNDF*). The effects of adding forages with digestible fiber to a diet are often times underestimated. Fiber digestibility [of forages] has a major impact on the profitability of a ration. The proven equation - 1 unit of *dNDF*=0.37 lbs of DMI and

0.55 lbs of milk (*Oba and Allen, Journal of Dairy Science 82:589, 1999*) - demonstrates the importance of fiber digestibility.

Fiber digestibility is not only important for making milk. Utilizing forages with high *dNDF* in transition cow diets can help maximize dry matter intake, improving the cow's appetite before and after calving. A simple thing like increasing dry matter intake can have an impressive effect on reducing the occurrence of metabolic problems in fresh cows and starting cows off on the right foot for the upcoming lactation.

Poor agronomic decisions made on the farm have a snowballing effect on the farm's productivity and ultimate profitability, in negative ways. It is commonly believed that to obtain quality feed, yield must be sacrificed. This is not true. Many **Silage Specific™** corn hybrids are available with superior digestibility, and some actually offer yield advantages over the more conventional dual-purpose hybrids. BMR corn hybrids may have a yield drag in stress-related situations, but offer such high *dNDF* content that the feeding performance with these hybrids can quickly pay for any potential yield loss. Other crops like BMR sorghum-sudangrass can also offer improved digestibility and high forage yields. There are numerous options for improving fiber digestibility in most operations without losing yields.

Check out the numerous corn hybrids we have to offer producers for 2006. Then take time to introduce and/or review what is available with your producers, with the goal of positioning selected hybrids that will best meet their nutritional needs and goals, along with appropriate consideration of hybrid maturity, soil and climatic conditions, etc.



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combining nutrition & agronomy for results!

Questions on Agronomy or Seed?

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