

Summer Forage Plans for Calving Pastures & Damaged Alfalfa Stands

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Beef producers often have areas where winter feeding activity or calving activity has damaged or destroyed the pastures. The warm season annual plants discussed below are great options to be planted annually into calving pastures. Warm season annuals can also provide excellent mid season forage production when planted into winter damaged alfalfa stands. Light tillage generally is required to distribute pasture nutrients, waste feed residue, and provide improved seed to soil contact. A no-till drill is the ideal way to seed warm season annuals. No-till drills will provide accurate depth control. Seed depth and seed to soil contact are essential to proper establishment. Seed should be placed 3/8 - 1/2 inch in deep for most of the small seeds.

Seeding Later in Spring – May and Early June

Warm season annuals can be a productive addition to your farm operation. Soil temps need to reach 60-65 degrees before seeding the species listed below. Seeding at about the same time as planting late soybeans is a safe rule of thumb. Seeding date must be past last potential frost date before planting warm season annuals. For additional annual forage production, many producers are planting warm season annuals following small grain forage harvest or after late spring manure applications.

Teff Grass – Reprieve® - Teff can be grazed or harvested as hay. Teff drilled into calving areas or weak alfalfa stands proved to be very successful in recent experiences. Good forage quality and works for dry cows, beef, horse, etc. Super fast recovery after grazing or cutting. Do not harvest below 4 inches due to limited root reserves for regrowth. Little to no prussic acid risk so Teff can be grazed after frost. Recommended seeding rate at 6 to 8 pounds per acre. Seed depth shallow; ¼ to 3/8 inch deep. Teff needs ample nitrogen management for high yield.

Brown Midrib (BMR) Sudangrass – Enorma – Good option to drill into winter damaged alfalfa stands. Works great for grazing but can make hay with good drying conditions. BMR types have increased forage digestibility quality; with forage quality acceptable to dairy production. Remove animals from grazing at frost time due to prussic acid concern. Seed at 20 to 25 pounds per acre in damaged alfalfa or calving pasture areas. Great choice to get fast, high quality forage.

Brown Midrib (BMR) Sorghum x Sudangrass Hybrids – Greentreat® Plus or Greentreat® Dynamo – The BMR trait makes forage quality outstanding feed for dairy or beef production. Sorghum x Sudangrass hybrids are ideally suited to silage or mid-summer grazing. For fast recovery after each cutting or grazing, leave 2-3 nodes at base of plant after grazing or cutting. Greentreat® Dynamo is a great example of a high yield Brachytic dwarf type. Sorghum x Sudangrass is not intended for hay. No concern of prussic acid if harvested as silage. Multiple cuts or grazing every 30 days during summer. Seed 20 to 25 pounds per acre into damaged/ weak alfalfa stands or thin pastures. Exceptional high yield potential.

Hybrid Pearl Millet – BMR209 or Leafy 23 – This specie option has been a great addition to warm season forage in the Midwest. Easy to establish with very good forage quality. Adapted for grazing or silage harvest for beef, dry cows, etc. Millets can be drilled into weak stands of alfalfa with success. Very productive forage during the hot and dry conditions once established. No prussic acid concern millets for fall grazing after frost. Exceptional recovery after grazing if plants are not over-grazed or cut too low.

Seeding Right Now – Late May...It's not too late for cool seasons!

Italian Ryegrass – Ryegrass is very easy to establish. **Tetrabana** brand or **Tetila** Italian ryegrass can be drilled into existing winter damaged alfalfa. Depending on competition from weeds and existing forage plants, you may also include 5 to 8 pounds of **Red Carpet** Premium Brand medium red clover. Ideally, plan to harvest the forage as haylage; drying to hay may be difficult depending on weather. Leave at least 2 to 3 inches of growth on grass and clover at harvest or grazing time. Italian types generally will remain vegetative all season long during the first year. Seeding rate of 12 to 15 pounds of Italian ryegrass with 5 to 8 pounds of red clover seeded into damaged alfalfa stands will add to your forage supply.

Ryegrass Brand – Jump Start Pasture Mix is an excellent ryegrass product option. Jump Start is a combination of several proprietary ryegrass varieties PLUS **Spring Green Festulolium**. A great product to supplement your immediate forage needs. Very palatable, can also be seeded with **Red Carpet** Premium Brand medium Red Clover or other legumes. Seed Jump Start at a rate of 12 to 15 per acre and Red Carpet at 5 to 8 pounds per acre. Ryegrass productivity general tends to fade when temperatures start to elevate during July; however this grass can provide and meet emergency forage if a deficient exists. Most other cool season grasses (Orchardgrass, Fescue, Timothy) tend to be slower to establish due to a more extensive root system and generally do not meet short term needs of emergency forage.

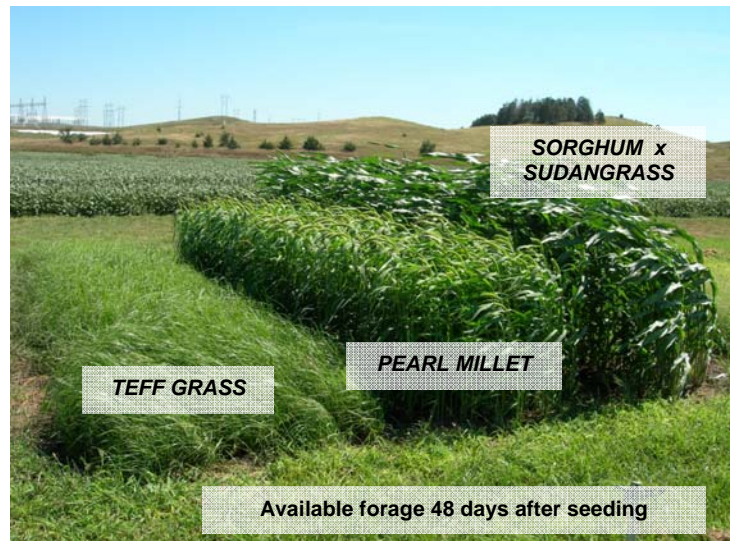


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