

Opportunities in Winter

Some things you just can't plan for – you just need to take advantage of the opportunities when they happen. It may be the dead of winter, but have you thought about what field work you could do before spring? Since most winters give us at least a few nice days without snow cover, let's take advantage of them to improve our pastures and hay fields.

For example, if the ground isn't frozen you can spray your alfalfa for winter annual weeds. Or maybe dormant seed some warm-season grass. Maybe you should move bales out of the field before spring rains make it a muddy mess. A really good practice would be to move cows out onto yucca infected pastures to let them winter graze and reduce some of the yucca problem. Or you could frost seed legumes, spray herbicides to control downy brome or wild oats if they are green, build some cross fences, tighten sagging perimeter fences, smooth out gopher mounds, spread phosphorus on your alfalfa, or even cut some cedar trees.

If you are like me, though, you never even think about those tasks this time of year, much less go out and do the work. And that's too bad because once spring arrives there will be so many other demands on your time that some of these jobs will be skipped entirely and others probably will be rushed and completed less effectively.

Winter normally isn't thought of as a time for field work, but if you're prepared you can take advantage of breaks in the weather to get a jump on spring activities. I'm not trying to make you feel guilty or give you more work to do. Just a friendly reminder that if weather breaks again, maybe you can take special advantage of it.

Dr. Bruce Anderson, Extension Forage Specialist
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
314 Keim Hall—East Campus
Lincoln NE 68583-0915
402-4742-2577
banderson1@unl.edu

