

## **Time to Put Nitrogen on Warm-Season Grasses**

As summer approaches, it soon becomes time to apply nitrogen to warm-season grasses. These grasses will begin growing rapidly as soil and air temperature increase. Adding the correct amount of nitrogen now will help these grasses produce extra hay or grazing.

How much should you apply? Well, that depends on your own situation. For starters, will you actually use the extra grass to graze more cattle or increase hay yields? It's surprising how often we apply fertilizer and then waste extra growth by grazing poorly. This may seem obvious, but unless you economically harvest extra growth as hay or with livestock, do not fertilize!

Also consider the ability of your warm-season grass to yield more. Taller warm-season grasses like big bluestem, switchgrass, and indiangrass will respond to nitrogen better than will shorter grasses like little bluestem, sideoats grama, or blue grama.

And finally, adjust nitrogen for moisture conditions. In eastern Nebraska, 50 to 60 pounds of nitrogen per acre works well for average or better moisture conditions. In central and western Nebraska only subirrigated meadows have enough growth potential to respond to added nitrogen; there about 40 pounds per acre will do.

If you can benefit from extra growth on your warm-season grasses, fertilize now, in late May, for high yields. Then graze or cut hay on a timely basis for profitable returns.

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