

EVALUATE FORAGE STATUS ON MEMORIAL DAY

Memorial Day is a good time to examine the status of hay and forage programs for the year.

Many hay and forage jobs should be completed, or at least started, by Memorial Day. For example, all perennial grasses or legumes should be planted by now. If you have planting still to do -- wait until August.

Spraying for musk thistle needs to occur before Memorial Day. Plants that have started to grow tall usually are not completely killed by spraying. Digging is your best option now.

Another job is fertilizing warm-season grasses with nitrogen. Complete it by Memorial Day or soon afterwards.

For high quality hay, your alfalfa should have been cut already if you are south of the Platte River and as soon as possible elsewhere. Later cutting might give hay that's good enough for many livestock, but there is little chance of getting dairy quality hay any more this cutting. And start planning now for any possible shortages.

Memorial Day also marks the start of the planting season for summer annual grasses for many folks. Sudans and forage sorghums can be planted now. Millets should be planted in a couple of weeks.

Memorial Day is a good time to estimate if your pastures will have enough moisture to produce the growth needed by your livestock this year. If drought has caused reduced growth, adjust animal numbers now before it's too late. Summer rains are not likely to allow you to catch up completely. And if growth is abundant, maybe you can cut some for hay instead.

Follow through with this Memorial Day evaluation and many hay and forage problems will be solved, or at least foreseen.

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