

December 23, 2016

## A FORAGE FOR EVERY SEASON

If you have cows, horses, ewes, or other livestock that can graze year-around, one of your goals should be to graze for as many days during the year as possible. But no matter where you are, no single pasture can meet that objective.

Warm-season range grasses provide good summer grazing in some areas, but more green grass would be nice in early spring and for late fall grazing. For livestock producers in many other places, though, smooth brome grass, wheatgrass, needlegrass, orchardgrass, fescue, and other cool-season grasses grow well in spring and fall but mid-summer pasture often is limiting.

To overcome these seasonal pasture shortages, you need to have several different types of pasture available. For example, warm-season grasses like the bluestems, indiangrass, blue grama, and switchgrass provide excellent summer pasture. Match them up with other, but separate, pastures or meadows that contain cool-season grasses for spring and fall grazing and you will have a good, long grazing season.

To extend grazing even further, plant winter wheat, rye, or triticale next fall to get pasture as early as late March. And oats planted in late July or August can be grazed through November, while turnips often provide pasture into December or even January. Don't forget that alfalfa and corn also can be grazed effectively throughout much of the year, giving you even more options for timely pasture.

Start looking at your pasture gaps. Maybe next year you can extend your grazing season with new and varied pastures.

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