

Watching the Grass Grow

As hay harvest winds down and we change focus, grass regrowth might be a low priority. That could be a mistake for forage managers. Now might be a good time to watch grass grow.

Wet weather delayed haying for many, meaning cool-season forages (brome/fescue) are just now growing again post-harvest. Unfortunately, neither temperature or moisture this time of year are typically optimum for growth, meaning the growth of those cool-season grasses can be slowed. With that delay comes a prime opportunity for weeds to get a foothold. Maybe this year will be the exception, but it's still a good idea to monitor stands for post haying/grazing recovery, to make sure weed pressure isn't getting out of hand.

It's a good time to monitor for insect pressure as well. With any luck, forages will recover quickly, negating any insect feeding that may occur. On numerous occasions over the past decade, however, armyworm feeding pressure has been greater than the rate of grass recovery. When that happens, photosynthetic capacity of the grass plant is reduced. If enough leaf area is removed, recovery can be delayed even further. Scout for insect feeding pressure until ample leaf area has returned to allow it to withstand feeding pressure.

The period from now through frost is critical for forages. Plants are at work to make sure they have enough root reserves for winter. Anything (like the above) that could slow recovery could also reduce stand vigor. If you want your stand going into winter in the best shape it can be, now really is a good time to watch the grass grow.

Tailgate Talk III Reminder

Don't forget to RSVP for All About Water, the topic of our Tailgate Talk III hosted by Jim and Susan Phillips on Wednesday, August 7th starting at 5:30 p.m. one and a half miles east of the junction of Highways K-4 and K-16 northeast of Valley Falls. We'll discuss options for moving water from point A to point B in an effort to add value to your grazing system. To help with the sponsored meal from the Jefferson County Conservation District, please RSVP to the Oskaloosa Office of the Meadowlark Extension District by Tuesday, August 6th by calling (785) 863-2212. You can also RSVP via e-mail to me at dhallaue@ksu.edu .

Tomatoes Not Ripening?

Temperatures may have moderated, but their effects on tomatoes have not. Optimum temperature for tomato growth and fruit development is in the 85 to

90-degree range. Get much above that and the plant reallocates resources to water movement and survival over fruit development. Once temperatures get back in to the mid-90s and below, ripening will speed up. The high temperatures can affect the color as well, since red pigments don't form properly above 95 degrees, leaving fruit more orange than red in color.

If you want to offset heat issues to a degree, pick tomatoes as they start to turn color. Nothing will be gained by leaving them on the plant, and fruit placed in a cooler environment (75-85 degrees F) will ripen more quickly with better color.