Today I am going to talk about tips for successfully establishing a fescue pasture. When reseeding or establishing a fescue pasture, or any crop for that matter, a soil test should be taken in order to determine if the soil needs any amendments. Lime, potassium and phosphorus all need to be at an optimum level in order to give your newly planted crop the best start possible to out-compete weeds and overwinter. pH should be at 6.5-7.0 in order for nutrients to become fully available to the plant. Potassium and phosphorus help plants to grow vigorously, encourage root development, fight disease and insect injury, overwinter and repair from any mechanical injury, such as mowing or grazing. If lime is needed it should be applied as soon as possible because it takes at least 6 months for lime to breakdown and begin changing the pH.

Nitrogen, however should be applied at a lesser amount, too much nitrogen can interfere with germination and in the case of a legume-grass mixture, it can discourage inoculation in the legumes. If you are planting on a budget, make sure the pH is in the correct range first, if pH is not at an optimum level, the other nutrients in the soil or applied by fertilizer are not available for uptake by the plant.

The best time of year to plant fescue is in the fall; for southwest Missouri, that is late August to September 15, and no later than September 30. Fall seedings of fescue usually have far less weed competition and more favorable moisture conditions than late spring seedings. Pure fescue stands should be broadcast at a rate of 15-20 pounds of pure live seed per acre or drilled ¼-½ inches deep at a rate of 10-15 pounds of pure live seed per acre. Fescue, red and white clover can be mixed at a rate of 10 pounds of fescue, 6 pounds of red clover and 1 pound of white clover per acre of pure live seed.

Once the stand is established, it is important to keep up with fertility to maintain yields. Lime should be added as needed by soil test recommendation. Potassium and phosphorus should be added yearly, if the soil test indicates these nutrients are needed. Nitrogen should be applied yearly, or if you would like to see optimum usage of nitrogen fertilizer, split the application and apply it in the spring, or April, and fall, or late August to mid-September.

Spring and fall are when fescue ramps up its growth and has maximum utilization of nitrogen fertilizer. Nitrogen does not stay in the soil, but is very mobile, so applying it when the plant is getting ready to uptake it, allows for maximum utilization.

If using a no-till drill to seed fescue, make sure seeding depth is correct. Fescue seed is small and if seeded to deep, it will have germination and emergence problems. Also ensure good seed-to-soil contact is made, by making sure the slot is properly closed. If the slot is not closed, dry weather can cause the soil to dry out and roots to dry out and die.
If a novel fescue, like Max Q, is being established, the spray-smother-spray program should be followed. Start in the spring by applying a burndown herbicide, like RoundUp, plant a summer annual crop (like sorghum sudan, millet, corn or early maturing soybeans) to smother any surviving KY31.

Once the summer annual crop is harvested, make another burndown herbicide application to ensure that all KY31 is killed and then plant the novel fescue. Wait at least 2 weeks after a burndown herbicide application, as germination can be affected by herbicide residual.

Once the stand is established, weeds should also be managed to maintain a strong stand. Summer annual weeds such as ragweed, poison hemlock, queen Ann’s lace, and plantains are most effectively controlled when herbicides are applied in April. Thistles are most effectively controlled during April and September, as long as it is in first year of growth, or the rosette stages and only the leaves are present.

Sericea lespedeza can be most effectively controlled with herbicide applications in late May to June or early to mid-September. Most small woody weeds can be effectively controlled with a broadcast herbicide application when the leaves are fully opened or in the case of blackberry at mid-bloom and multiflora rose at full-bloom.

Herbicides like Outrider controls or partially controls Johnson grass and sedge grasses in fescue pastures and Yukon controls or partially controls sedge grasses.

These herbicides will burn the fescue, so area applications versus whole field applications are advised. These herbicides have not been in research plots at University of Missouri, but likely take multiple applications to completely control established Johnson grass and sedge weeds.

According to a chemical representative, should be applied around June or when Johnson grass is 3-4 feet tall. Weed-wiper applications can also be made when Johnson grass is much taller than the desired fescue and legume forages. As always, when using any pesticide read and follow the label directions.

There is an upcoming Grazing School in Lamar that focuses on optimizing pasture utilization with fertility, economics, livestock and fencing and water systems along with a farm tour- from 6-9pm on September 27, 29 and October 4th and 9am-2pm October 1st. Must be pre-registered.
Regional Grazing School
Lamar MO

September 27, 29
&
October 1, 4
6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Barton County Extension
801 E 12th
Lamar, MO 64759

Course Fee:
$100/person
or
$150/couple or farm pair
sharing materials

For more information contact:

Jill Scheidt
MU Extension
Agronomy Specialist

(417) 682-3579
scheidtjk@missouri.edu

Lamar Regional Grazing School Registration Form: $100/ person

Name: __________
________________________________________
Address: _____________________________________
____________________________________________
City, State, Zip: _____________________________
_________________________________________
Phone: _____________________________
_________________________________________
List any dietary restrictions: __________________
_________________________________________

E-mail ________________________________
_____________________________________

Make checks payable to: University Extension
Clip and return by September 20 with enrollment fee to:
Barton County Extension
801 E. 12th St
Lamar, MO 64759

Continued on page 4
Speakers

Jill Scheidt– MU Extension, Agronomy
Patrick Adams– NRCS
Mark Green– NRCS Resource Conservationist
Patrick Davis– MU Extension, Livestock
Drexel Atkisson- NRCS District Conservationist
Nathan Witt– NRCS Resource Conservationist
Wesley Tucker– MU Extension Ag Business
Myron Hartzell- NRCS Grassland Specialist

Farm Tour

Russ Massa Farm–

October 1– Saturday
(Russ Massa Farm– from Lamar: W on 160 to N on 80th ln; 1.5 miles. West side of road)

9:00-9:30 Pasture Allocation Review
Mark Green

9:30-10:15 Fencing for Grazing Systems
Nathan Witt

10:15-11:00 Livestock Water
Drexel Atkisson

11:00-12:00 Forage Stand Evaluation
Mark Green

12:00-12:30 Sandwich Lunch
12:30-1:45 Farm Tour

October 4– Tuesday

6:00-6:50 Graziers Arithmetic
Wesley Tucker

6:50-7:50 Layout and Design
Myron Hartzell

7:50-8:00 Break

8:00-9:00 Economics of Grazing Mgmt.
Wesley Tucker

September 27– Tuesday

6:00-6:15 Intro and Pre-test,
Jill Scheidt

6:15-6:45 Art and Science of MiG
Pat Adams

6:45-7:45 Evaluating Farm Resources
Pat Adams

7:45-8:00 Break

8:00-9:30 Soils, Pasture Fertility and Plant Basics Jill Scheidt

September 29– Thursday

6:00-6:50 Matching Forages to Livestock Patrick Davis

6:50-7:00 Break

7:00-8:00 Pasture Evaluation & Allocation Mark Green

8:00-9:00 Livestock Nutrition
Patrick Davis