

# POLK COUNTY GRAZIER

May 3, 2022



*An eNewsletter by the Rich Mountain  
Conservation District*

The University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service is an excellent source of information for graziers. There are many factsheet publications on forages, weeds, and grazing management. Check out their website at: [University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service \(uada.edu\)](http://uada.edu) Or visit your local Extension office for more information. The below article is adapted from their Forage Management Guide.

## **BERMUDAGRASS**(part 1 of 2)

*ADAPTED FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE,  
FORAGE MANAGEMENT GUIDE*

Bermudagrass is grown on approximately 2 million acres in Arkansas. Because of its ruggedness, good quality and dependable yields, it provides the backbone of the warm-season perennial grass program. It breaks dormancy in spring when temperatures rise above 60° F and reaches peak production at 85° to 95° F, giving a productive period from May to September. When teamed with tall fescue and other grasses that grow best during cool weather, bermudagrass helps provide year-round pastures for beef, dairy, and sheep producers, as well as pleasure horse owners. Ideally, bermudagrass or other warm-season grasses should comprise 30 to 50 percent of a farmer's total forage acreage in north Arkansas and 50 to 65 percent of the total in south Arkansas.

The two main types of bermudagrass are common and hybrids. Common bermudagrasses are persistent perennials, short, fine-leaved, and fine-stemmed. Common bermudagrasses produce viable seed in Arkansas, but most seed commercially used in our state is produced in the western United States. Hybrids are perennial, tall, coarse-stemmed and large-leaved. Hybrids respond better to nitrogen fertilizer and usually produce higher forage yields than do varieties of common bermudagrass.

Bermudagrass spreads by above-ground runners called stolons and underground runners called rhizomes. Stolons and rhizomes can form leaves and roots at each node. Stolons and rhizomes can form new roots and leaves at every joint, creating new plants that can become detached and exist independently of the parent plant. This trait makes it possible to establish new bermudagrass fields using transplanted rhizomes (sprigs) from old fields. This is a highly desirable trait in pastures where spread is wanted, but undesirable if bermudagrass is growing as a weed in row crops.

Varieties of bermudagrass may be grown in any county in Arkansas. Coastal, Alicia, Brazos, and Tifton 85 are strains of hybrid bermudagrass that are not well adapted north of Little Rock because they do not have good winter hardiness. Tifton 44 and Midland are two hybrid types and Guymon and Greenfield are two varieties of the common types that are winter-hardy enough to grow as far north as the Missouri state line, but even these can be damaged in especially severe winters. The youngest part of stolons normally die back from the tip each winter or during periods

of severe drought. Large, thick rhizomes are more resistant to winterkill than smaller, thin ones. Stands that have been stressed in the fall by overgrazing, low soil fertility, or drought may have low root energy reserves which can lead to severe winter die-back, especially on varieties or hybrids that are least tolerant of cold winters. Newly planted fields are susceptible to winterkill in north Arkansas during the winter of their establishment year unless proper levels of potash are applied and the crop is planted by the recommended planting date. Bermudagrass is more drought tolerant than other warm-season perennial grasses like dallisgrass and bahiagrass. It is adapted to any moderately well-drained soil, but does not do well on heavy soil (unless irrigated) because of poor root penetration. It will tolerate soil pH values as low as 5.5, will tolerate some flooding, but makes little growth in water-logged soils. It will not survive well in areas immediately above terraces or in low spots in fields where water stands.

### **Common Bermudagrass**

The term "common" bermudagrass has two meanings. One refers to the general type of bermudagrass that is fine-stemmed, short, persistent, produces viable seed and volunteers easily in Arkansas fields, therefore having potential as a weed pest. Common bermudagrass is grown in preference to hybrids on rough sites too rocky or steep for haying, on shallow soils, poorly drained soils, or soils with high water tables. Common bermudagrass is also preferred on fields where minimal fertilizer will be applied, when the primary use will be pasture rather than hay, and when sprigging equipment is not available. It is an excellent pasture plant that can yield roughly 75 percent as much forage as hybrids under good management. Establishing common bermudagrass from seed is usually less expensive per acre than sprigging hybrids. Common bermudagrass is not as productive as hybrid bermudagrass under heavy nitrogen applications, but it out competes hybrid types for other nutrients when nitrogen fertility is low. For this reason, hybrid bermudagrass fields may "turn to" common bermudagrass if both are initially present and nitrogen applications are low. The second usage of "common" is to describe an unnamed variety of the seed-producing type of bermudagrass. Seed labeled as common may be a wild-growing bermudagrass, a mixture of several varieties of bermudagrass, or seed of a single variety that the seller does not want to guarantee as pure. Seed of unnamed varieties usually costs less than

named varieties. There are over 150 different strains of common bermudagrass with varying potential productivities. In general, common types tend to be susceptible to leaf diseases, susceptible to winter damage in their first year, and have low productivity in late fall. Yields depend on location, management, and fertility. Common bermudagrass yields have ranged from 3.4 to 6.6 tons per acre in northern Arkansas variety tests and 4.7 to 7.0 tons per acre in southern Arkansas.

### **Starting Bermudagrass from Seed**

Seedbeds for establishing bermudagrass should be fertile, free of weeds, firm, and moist, and soil pH should be above 5.5. Lime is best applied and incorporated six months prior to planting to allow time for the soil pH to adjust to the desired level. Fertilizer should be applied according to soil test recommendations at planting time. Because bermudagrass seedlings are weak competitors, weeds should be controlled with recommended tillage and herbicide applications. **Because bermudagrass seed are very small (2,071,000 hulled seed per pound) and easily planted too deep, the field should be disked and rolled firmly prior to planting.** Seed should be placed no deeper than 1/4 inch for best germination and emergence, and the field should then be rerolled. Coated seed is more expensive, but it germinates much better than uncoated seed. In north Arkansas, 5 to 10 lbs per acre of good hulled seed should be planted between April 15 and June 15. In south Arkansas, the recommended planting window is two weeks earlier, from April 1 to June 1. Applying 45 to 60 lbs of nitrogen to new stands when runners begin to form encourages spreading. Nitrogen application can be repeated every five to six weeks until mid-August. Weeds should be controlled until plants are well-established. When plants are more than 4 inches tall they may be grazed, and should be rotationally grazed to a 2-inch height as regrowth allows, perhaps as often as every three weeks. Grazing should be stopped 30 days before frost to allow plants to accumulate nutrient reserves for winter survival.



*Bermudagrass photo by University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service*

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# *"Take Care of the Land and the Land will Take Care of You"*

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## **LOOK -----> Farewell and Good Luck to Jessica Beck!**

Jessica has been the Water Quality Technician at the Rich Mtn Conservation District since May 2019 and has been writing nutrient management plans and assisting landowners in both Polk and Montgomery Counties. She will be leaving her position for greener pastures and the RMCD would like to wish her the best of luck in her new career.



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# Upcoming Grazing Meetings and Seminars:

⇒ **Today!** May 3, 2022 – **Conventional Tillage Seed Bed Preparation Demonstration for Pasture (1PM—online seminar)**

You are invited to attend the weekly grazing training sessions by Jeremy Huff, the USDA/NRCS state grazing specialist. He offers these training sessions as a Zoom meeting and the instructions for logging in are included in attached flyer. If you have the Zoom app on your phone you can just scan the QR code on the flyer. If you want to watch the presentation on your computer there is a link included in the attachment. The sessions are normally every Tuesday at 1pm so **see the attached flyer.**



⇒ **May 20-21, 2022 – 2022 Beef  
Stockman & Stewardship**

Topics include: cattle handling and care, nutrition, environmental stewardship, herd health. To be held at the Wickes Community Center 9:30am-2:30pm with a meal provided. For more information contact the Polk County Extension Office at 479-394-6018 or by email at [sbeaty@uada.edu](mailto:sbeaty@uada.edu) See attached flyer.

⇒ **May 24-June 16, 2022 – Wild Turkey  
and Bobwhite Quail Field Day Tours**

The Arkansas Game & Fish Commission has planned several field day tours around the state with one of those being near Mena on 5/24/2022 at 1pm. A flyer is attached that show the other dates and locations around Arkansas. You can register for the tour by clicking here: <https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/178225>. For more information contact the West Central Arkansas Private Lands Biologist for AGFC, Michelle Furr, at 479-478-1043 or by email at [michelle.furr@agfc.ar.gov](mailto:michelle.furr@agfc.ar.gov).

⇒ **The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT)** is a national organization started in 1976 to provide sustainable agriculture technology information to small farmers. Their events page includes many online and in-person agriculture training events from around the country: [www.ncat.org/events/](http://www.ncat.org/events/). Here is also a link to their very popular sustainable agriculture training program for military veterans: [www.armedtofarm.org](http://www.armedtofarm.org).

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**Rich Mountain  
Conservation  
District**

Email:

[richmountainconservation@gmail.com](mailto:richmountainconservation@gmail.com)

Web: [www.rmcd.org](http://www.rmcd.org)

Phone: (479)437-6054

Mail: 508 7th Street, Mena, AR 71953

Take a picture with your cell phone to visit the RMCD website —>



**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Archived copies of the "POLK COUNTY GRAZIER" are now available on the Rich Mtn. Conservation District website at:**

[Publications - Rich Mountain Conservation District \(rmcd.org\)](http://rmcd.org)

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Sent on behalf of the Rich Mtn Conservation District.  
Thanks for your interest in grazing management and  
conservation,

**Steve Swall**

District Conservationist  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Mena Service Center (Polk & Montgomery Counties)  
(479)437-6054

*Please reply to unsubscribe if you do not wish to receive this  
newsletter.*

# The Tuesday Pasture Talk

Learn about Pasture  
Topics with us



Anyone is  
welcome to join



May 3, 2022  
1:00pm CST

Conventional Tillage Seed  
Bed Preparation  
Demonstration for Pasture

Presenter: Jeremy Huff, AR  
NRCS State Grazing Lands  
Specialist

May 10, 2022  
1:00pm CST

Forage Advisor Web  
Application Demonstration

Presenter: Dr. John  
Jennings, Professor/Forage  
Specialist, University  
of Arkansas

May 17, 2022  
1:00pm CST

Pollinator's Role in the  
Pasture System

Presenter: Xavier Price, AR  
NRCS NW Area Grassland  
Specialist

May 24, 2022  
1:00pm CST

Double OO Ranch: Ryegrass and  
Cereal Rye/Vetch/Crimson Clover  
Establishment and Grazing  
Demonstration

Presenter: Sandy Jackson,  
Owner; Sam Tabler, Forage  
Manager, and Jeremy Huff, State  
Grazing Lands Specialist

## Expect to Learn:



What does a seedbed need to look  
like prior to planting bermudagrass  
seed?



Do you want to make grazing calculations easy?  
Tune-in to learn about University of Arkansas's  
new forage advisor web application.



Are pasture clovers beneficial for pollinators?  
Hear what a bee expert has to say!



Watch a video demonstration from September  
2021 to May 2022 on the establishment and  
grazing of ryegrass and a combination of cereal  
rye, vetch, and crimson clover.

## Join by these Methods:

Direct Link:

[Click Here  
to Join](#)

Phone:



Website:

Zoom  
Meeting ID: 869  
6752 1953  
Passcode: 440061

Questions or  
Comments:

jeremy.huff@usda.gov  
or (501) 413-0527



**MAY 20TH OR 21ST**

**CLASSROOM &  
OUTDOOR  
ACTIVITIES**

**MEAL PROVIDED**

**2022**

# **BEEF STOCKMAN & STEWARDSHIP**

**Wickes Community  
Center 9:30a- 2:30p  
Limit 25 people/day  
Register by May 11th**

REGISTRATION:

**(479)394-6018**

## **Topics will include**

**Cattle Handling & Care  
Biosecurity  
Herd Health  
Transportation  
Nutrition**

**Environmental Stewardship**

**Worker Safety  
Emergency Action Plan**

**You will be BQA Certified at  
completion**

# Wild Turkey and Bobwhite Quail Field Day Tours

May 24<sup>th</sup> - June 16<sup>th</sup>

Locations include:

Mena, AR - May 24, 2022

<https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/178225>

Yellville, AR - May 26, 2022

<https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/178147>

Sherwood, AR - June 7, 2022

<https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/178193>

Pocahontas, AR - June 9, 2022

<https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/179941>

Hickory Plains, AR - June 15, 2022

<https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/181518>

Huntsville, AR - June 16, 2022

<https://www.register-ed.com/events/view/181489>

