

POLK COUNTY GRAZIER

January 18, 2022



*An eNewsletter by the Rich Mountain
Conservation District*

WHITE **CLOVER**

(part 2)

In the December 14th edition of the Polk County Grazer we discussed the pros and cons of integrating White Clover into a grazing system.

(check it out by clicking here→
[whiteclover polk county grazier](#)) Now we will
examine how to establish White Clover.

WHITE CLOVER ESTABLISHMENT – Start by deciding which field(s) you want to plant. You should not plan to plant your entire farm to White Clover (or any other legume). Start with a field with good well drained soils since overly wet areas or rocky and steep areas won't do well. Next, it is important to have soil with the proper fertility that is suitable for growing White Clover so a soil test can be taken to see what nutrients might be lacking. It is common for soil tests in this area to show a need for lime, Potassium, and sometimes Phosphorus. It is best to apply the lime 1-6 months in advance of the seeding date and the Potassium and Phosphorus at the time of seeding or soon afterwards. There are also some other micronutrients that may be recommended. Nitrogen should not be applied when establishing White Clover or other legumes since that will only make the grass grow more.

Although it might seem counterintuitive, removing as much of the grass as possible before planting will be highly beneficial. The clover seedlings will need some sunlight once they germinate and too much grass provides too much shade for the young plants to grow. Excess grass can be hayed, mowed, sprayed, or grazed down in

order to reduce the competition on your new clover stand. This is one of the few times that grazing a field too short is recommended.

White Clover seed should be inoculated with the proper Rhizobium bacteria. This bacteria is what allows the clover to "make" Nitrogen. You can purchase this inoculant but usually it is already found on coated seed. If you purchase a high quality coated seed you should not have to worry with inoculating the seed and the coating will also provide the added benefit of increased germination rates.

In Arkansas, White Clover should either be planted in the fall (September 15-October 15) or late winter (February 15-March 15) at rates between 2 and 4 pounds of seed per acre. On pastures with thick stands of warm season grasses (such as Bermudagrass or Bahia grass) it is recommended to delay planting until October so that frost can reduce some of the competition. Because the seed is tiny (similar to grains of sand) it should not be planted very deep (0-1/4"). Here are some of the common planting methods:

⇒ **Frost-Seeding** - This is one of the easiest seeding methods and basically means that seed will be broadcast in late winter where the freezing and thawing of the soil will "set" the seed at the proper depth. There is usually less grass competition and ample soil moisture that time of year and the soils are

beginning to warm up. If planted earlier than February 15, the seeds may germinate too early and be killed by later hard frosts. If planted after March 15, the amount of cool season grass competition increases quickly and significantly. The best time to broadcast the seed is immediately before or after a "hard" frost that freezes the soil surface creating a honeycomb appearance but before the next rainfall. Dragging the field with a tire drag or harrow during or after seeding will help cover the seed slightly with the added benefit of spreading manure piles.

⇒ **No-Till Drilling** – This method requires the use of a specialized piece of equipment called a no-till pasture drill to plant the seed. It is very important that the seed not be planted too deep so a small seed box planter is a must for planting White Clover. The disc openers on the planter should be just barely cutting the soil surface and setting the seed at about ¼" deep. Using a no-till drill allows for planting in the fall and reduced planting rates of 2-3 pounds per acre instead of the 3-4 pounds per acre recommended for broadcast seeding methods. The local conservation district owns a no-till pasture drill that is capable of planting White Clover and is for rent.

⇒ **Disc & Broadcasting** – This method allows planting White Clover without the use of a no-till pasture drill and when the weather is not conducive to frost-seeding. The idea is to lightly "scratch" the soil surface with a disc, broadcasting the seed, and then

dragging the field. This allows for some of the seed to be placed slightly below the soil surface and some on top of the soil surface and so planting rates should be increased to 3-4 pounds per acre. This method can be used in either the fall or the late winter planting seasons.

Livestock should be removed from the field by the time the seed starts germinating and then kept off the field until the clover is at least 6" tall. An exception to this would be if there is excessive grass growth that is preventing the clover from growing; then flash grazing would be an option to limit competition from the grass.

However you decide to plant White Clover you will be rewarded with many years of quality livestock forage provided that you do not spray it with certain herbicides (especially Grazon P+D and Remedy) and care is taken to prevent overgrazing (maintain at least 2" grazing height).

LOOK -----> The Rich Mountain Conservation District will be conducting our annual Poultry Producer Workshop on February 7th, 2022.

The Rich Mountain Conservation District

is having our

Annual Poultry Registration Meeting and Chili Supper

Guest Speakers: USA Solar Networks, Local Poultry with Solar and NRCS

They will speak with us about commercial solar and NRCS Conservation Program opportunities.

When: Monday, February 7th @ 6:00 p.m.

Where: Polk County Fairgrounds—Commercial Building
156 Polk 43—Mena

Come join us for delicious chili, new information, and good company. You can also register your poultry facility at that time.

Please call to let us know if you plan to come

479-437-6054



Upcoming Grazing Meetings and Seminars:

⇒ **TODAY!** January 18, 2022 – Forage Quality, Cattle Digestion, and Cow Manure: What's the Connection?— Acorn Poisoning in Cattle (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**.

⇒ **February 8, 10, 15, 17, 2022 – Forage Management from the Ground Up**

Training (times and location to be announced) Please call Polk County Extension (479)394-6018 to register or for more information. This training is four sessions (Session 1-Soils and Nutrients, Session 2-Pastures, Session 3-Extending Grazing, and Session 4-Weeds). Cost is \$15/session or \$40 for all four. **A flyer is attached.**

**Rich Mountain
Conservation
District**

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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://Publications - Rich Mountain Conservation District (rmcd.org))

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

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LEARN ABOUT PASTURE TOPICS WITH US

- ➔ **MORE KNOWLEDGE**
- ➔ **IMPROVED DECISIONS**
- ➔ **BETTER GRAZING**

Here is what we're discussing in January:

- **January 11, 2022 @ 1pm CST**
Barbed Fence: Wire Basics and Selection
Presenter: Jeremy Huff
- **January 18, 2022 @ 1pm CST**
Forage Quality, Cattle Digestion, and Cow Manure: What's the Connection?
Presenter: Jeremy Huff
- **January 25, 2022 @ 1pm CST**
Interactive Conservation Planning Pasture Exercise
Presenter: Jeremy Huff

Want to Join? Use the below link or QR code to join.



[Click Here to Join](#)

Zoom
Meeting ID: 812 9041 3672
Passcode: 934229

Expect to Learn:

- What's the difference in low carbon and high tensile wire? Why is galvanization important? How can I select wire that will not rust?
- What influences forage quality? What role do rumen microbes serve in digestion? What observations can be made from manure piles?
- Observe a pasture virtually for conservation planning purposes. Provide input on observed resource concerns. Learn from others on alternatives for treatment options.

Questions or Comments:

- Contact Jeremy Huff at jeremy.huff@usda.gov or (501) 413-0527 (Text or Call)



**FEBRUARY 8, 10,
15, & 17
COST
\$10/SESSION OR
\$30 FOR 4
STARTS AT 6 PM
MEAL PROVIDED**

2022

FORAGE SHORTCOURSE

To be held at Extension
Education Building
211 De Queen St. Mena

REGISTRATION:

(479)394-6018

Topics will include

**Feb. 8-Soil-types, Nutrient
Overview, Soil Testing, Soil
Analysis, Nutrient & Water
Quality Concerns**

**Feb. 10-Forage ID, Forage
Quality, & Pasture Inventory**

Feb. 15-Extending Grazing

**Feb. 17- Weed ID, Poisonous
Weeds, & Weed Control**