

POLK COUNTY GRAZIER

August 22, 2022



*An eNewsletter by the Rich Mountain
Conservation District*

**Article by Jeremy Huff, Arkansas NRCS
Grazing Specialist, for the June 2022 issue
of the Arkansas Cattlemen's Association
publication ([Arkansas Cattlemen's
Association](https://www.arkcattlemen.org/) | Little Rock, AR | arbeef.org)**



Pastures are a Solar Panel.

Green growing leaves capture solar energy for plants to grow.

Bare ground doesn't capture solar energy for plants. The "take-home message" is it's the *leaves* that do this work – take care of the plant's leaves!

One benefit rotational grazing provides is pasture rest. Rest provides plants the opportunity to grow more leaves. Plant leaves capture solar energy which is required for photosynthesis. The photosynthesis process provides the plant energy to live and grow.

Understanding when the plant is most photosynthetically efficient is important. Plants that are in their early growth stage may not be as photosynthetically efficient because the limited leaf area isn't capturing a high percentage of solar energy. Plants that are late in their growth stage with many leaves have a tendency to shade one another. Leaves are most photosynthetically efficient mid-way during their growth stage. Keeping the plants in the mid-growth stage is a complicated but rewarding goal to establish. Producers who practice intensive grazing management have more management control over their resources. Pasture diversity is an important concept for many producers. The canopy structure of grasses and legumes (clovers) can complement each other in regards to capturing efficient amounts of solar energy. Grasses typically have more vertical leaf orientation. Legumes (clovers) generally have more horizontal orientation. A classic example of this in Arkansas is a tall fescue/white clover mixture.

What is Overgrazing?

Everybody has their own opinion on what is overgrazing – and that’s great! I will share with you my perspective on overgrazing. Overgrazing happens when the plant is bitten multiple times without regaining a positive carbohydrate balance. Overgrazing typically occurs when cattle remain on a field too long and the same plant is continuously bitten while having inadequate energy reserves. Also, overgrazing occurs when cattle return to a rested pasture before the plant has time to recover (the plant hasn’t regained a positive carbohydrate balance). Overgrazing is more a function of grazing time (duration) compared to grazing pressure.

Don’t forget plant roots are as much of the plant as its leaves! Did you know the



amount of plant roots are directly related to the amount of leaf content? Manage for top growth and you will in-return manage for root growth. How often do you evaluate pastures from only the surface up? It’s interesting to consider half of the plant is below the surface. A visual we don’t always see! Roots are important. Should we single trait select and establish plants just for having deep roots?



Not necessarily. Are there ways to manage for root growth? Yes – the same way you would manage for top growth!

Can we influence the water cycle with management?






Yes! The amount of plant cover left on pastures improves the water cycle. The plant cover reduces run off which leads to better water infiltration into the soil profile.

Drought Monitor

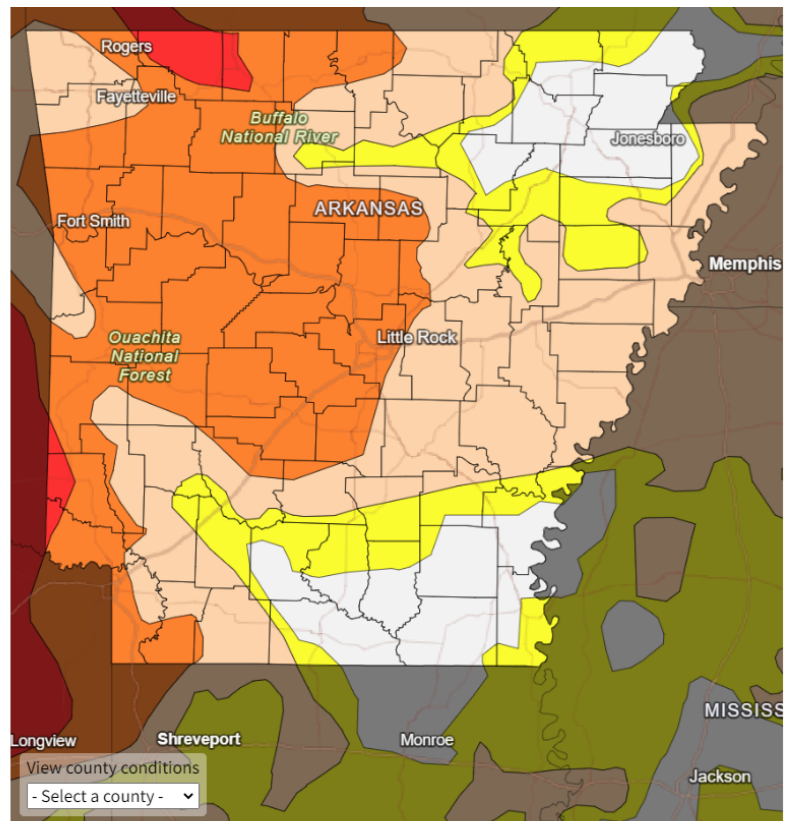
The most recent version (8/18/22) of the drought monitor shows most of Polk County to be in a D2 (Severe Drought) with southwest Polk County to be in a D3 area (Extreme Drought) and eastern Polk County to be in a D1 (Moderate Drought). A new version should be released on August 25th.

You can go to the drought monitor site by clicking here: [Arkansas | Drought.gov](https://www.drought.gov/arkansas)

The following state-specific drought impacts were compiled by the [National Drought Mitigation Center](https://www.drought.gov/). While these impacts are not exhaustive, they can help provide a clearer picture of drought in Arkansas.

	D0 - Abnormally Dry • Fire danger increases	85.4% of AR (D0-D4)
	D1 - Moderate Drought • Forage crops are stunted • River levels decline • More wildfires occur than normal	72.4% of AR (D1-D4)
	D2 - Severe Drought • Crops are negatively impacted; some crops are not planted; hay yield is low; farmers begin feeding cattle early • Burn bans begin • Reservoirs decline; rivers are very low; rivers are dredged	37.4% of AR (D2-D4)
	D3 - Extreme Drought • Pastures are depleted; hay is short; cattle are sold • There are more insects than normal; trees show drought stress; wildlife seek food and water • Water shortages are noted; water table is low; stock ponds are dry	1.8% of AR (D3-D4)
	D4 - Exceptional Drought • Crops have little or no yield; cattle weights are low; milk production is low • Trees and wildlife are dying • Daily life is impacted for outdoor workers	0% of AR (D4)

Source(s): [NDMC](https://www.ndbc.noaa.gov/), [NOAA](https://www.noaa.gov/), [USDA](https://www.usda.gov/)



Updates Weekly - 08/16/22

**DON'T FORGET!----->Polk County
Approved for LFP**

The Polk County FSA Office has been notified that, on July 26, 2022, Polk County rated a D3 on the Drought Monitor and met the requirements to Administer the Livestock Feed Program (LFP). Polk County FSA is taking applications for the 2022 LFP Program.

For additional information, contact the local FSA Office at (479) 394-1933 or stop by the office at 508 7th Street in Mena.

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

*---Hugh Hammond Bennett, First Chief of the Natural Resources
Conservation Service*

Plant of the Week

Elderberry



- Common Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) is a deciduous woody perennial plant that is native to the eastern United States.
- Mature Elderberry plants are clump-like shrubs or small trees that can reach a height of 10-20 feet.
- The plants flower in the June-July and produce a cluster of dark purple fruits that are ripe in July-October.
- Elderberry is in the Honeysuckle family – same as Honeysuckles and Viburnums.
- Elderberry is adapted statewide in Arkansas and grows on both moist and dry soils in openings.
- This is a highly beneficial plant to wildlife, especially songbirds, but is also browsed by deer, quail, and turkeys.
- Elderberry has been used for thousands of years as a medicinal plant by indigenous people.
- Traditional folk medicine also holds the fruit in high regards for the treatment of mild upper respiratory tract infection and colds.
- The fruit has been used for jams, jellies, and syrups and is very high in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants.
- Elderberry is being cultivated in Arkansas and other states on a commercial scale.

You can learn more about plants at the [USDA – NRCS PLANTS Database](#) (USDA Plants Database).

Upcoming Grazing Meetings and Seminars:

⇒ **TOMMOROW!** August 23, 2022 – Effect of herbicide sod-suppression on yield of late-summer planted forages for fall grazing

Presenter: Kenny Simon, Program Associate,
University of Arkansas (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**.

⇒ **August 25, 2022 – Productive Forest-
Protecting Water and Promoting Wildlife
Workshop**

**(5:30-8:00pm) @ Polk County Extension
Education Building in Mena, Arkansas (see the
attached flyer)**

⇒ **August 30, 2022 – Shade: Perspective from the Soil, Plants, and Animals**

Presenter: Jeremy Huff, State Grazing Lands Specialist, Arkansas (1pm - online seminar)

Next week's weekly grazing training sessions by Jeremy Huff, the USDA/NRCS state grazing specialist. The sessions are normally every Tuesday at 1pm so [see the attached flyer](#).

⇒ **September 22, 2022 – Rich Mtn Conservation District Grazing Management Workshop/Pasture Walk**

(6:00-8:30pm) @ Duane & Dot Webb Farm near Mena, Arkansas [\(see the attached flyer\)](#)

Topics Include:

- **Soil Health & Why It Matters In Pastures**
 - **Using Electric Fencing & Waterers**
- **Stockpiling and Strip Grazing Strategies**
- **Planting & Managing Winter Annuals**
 - **Feeding Less Hay**
 - **USDA Programs Available**

The Rich Mtn Conservation District has equipment available for rent to landowners in Polk County:

SUNFLOWER NO TILL DRILL

\$10 ACRE, \$50 MINIMUM

TYE NO TILL DRILL

\$10 ACRE, \$50 MINIMUM

HOG TRAP

\$100 DEPOSIT (RESTRICTIONS APPLY)

RHINO POST DRIVER

\$150 PER WEEK (5 days) with a \$100 deposit

3 POINT CYCLONE SEEDER (NEW!)

\$75.00 per week (5 days) with a \$50 deposit

Building electric fence?

We have a spinning jenny & electric fence tester available for landowners use

Please contact Deanna at (479)437-6054 for more information or to make a reservation. Note: the available days for the no till drills are filling up fast for this fall so call and make arrangements as soon as possible! Most winter annuals such as Ryegrass, Wheat, or Cereal Rye should be planted between September 1 and November 1 but September 15-October 15 is usually optimum.

Know someone who would enjoy receiving
this newsletter?

Please feel free to forward it to them and
have them contact our office to be on the
mailing list in the future!

**Rich Mountain
Conservation
District**

Email:

richmountainconservation@gmail.com

Web: 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://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

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



●	●	●	●	●
August 2, 2022 1:00pm CST	August 9, 2022 1:00pm CST	August 16, 2022 1:00pm CST	August 23, 2022 1:00pm CST	August 30, 2022 1:00pm CST
Drought Monitor: Factors and Considerations Associated with the Weekly Map	Pasture Management during a Drought	Armyworms and Bermudagrass Stem Maggot	Effect of herbicide sod-suppression on yield of late-summer planted forages for fall grazing	Shade: Perspective from the Soil, Plants, and Animals
Presenter: Dr. Deborah Bathke, US Drought Monitor Author	Presenter: Dr. John Jennings, Extension Forage Specialist and Professor, University of Arkansas	Presenter: Dr. Kelly Loftin, Extension Entomologist, University of Arkansas	Presenter: Kenny Simon, Program Associate, University of Arkansas	Presenter: Jeremy Huff, State Grazing Lands Specialist, Arkansas NRCS

Expect to Learn:



What can you do to help the authors of the US Drought Monitor?



What can producers do now to help manage pastures in a drought.



What to do when pastures are affected by armyworms and/or bermudagrass stem maggot.



How do you get earlier growth from fall planted forages?



What type of shade is the best for livestock?

Join by these Methods:

Direct Link:

Website:

[Click Here to Join](#)

Zoom Meeting ID: 836 1963 7075
Passcode: 650511

Phone:



Questions or Comments:

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

USDA is an Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer, Provider and Lender

September 22, 2022 | 6 P.M.

Duane & Dot Webb Farm
770 Polk 74, Mena, Arkansas

Sponsored by Rich Mtn Conservation District

Call (479)437-6054 for more information

Grazing Management Workshop

Come learn more about grazing and pasture management in Western Arkansas! Topics include:

- Soil Health & Why It Matters In Pastures
- Using Electric Fencing & Waterers
- Stockpiling and Strip Grazing Strategies
- Planting & Managing Winter Annuals
- Feeding Less Hay
- USDA Programs Available

Productive Forest-Protecting Water & Promoting Wildlife

August 25, 2022

5:30 - 8:00 p.m.

Extension Education Building

211 De Queen St., Mena

Dinner Provided

Workshop Themes:

Forestry Management-Why, What, When to Thin
Forest Management Practices to
Promote Water Quality
Improving Wildlife in Your Forest

Please register by calling the Polk County Extension
Office at 479-394-6018 by August 17th.

Sponsored by:

Productive Forest Protecting Waters

U of A DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
RESEARCH & EXTENSION
University of Arkansas System

NRCS
Natural Resources Conservation Service