

Alternatives to Producing Own Hay

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Cow-Calf profitability Conferences



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Agricultural Economics at UK | www.agecon.ca.uky.edu

Cooperative
Extension Service

*#1
Hire
Custom Hay
Producer*

Custom Hay Production

\$15-25 per roll
→ \$30-40 per ton

<http://agecon.ca.uky.edu/files/customratesky.pdf>



Custom Hay Production Timeliness Problem

Possible Solutions:

- Graze early spring – set hay back
- Annual lespedeza



Pasture-Hay-Pasture System

How it Works:

- Graze hard early spring
- Cut hay early-mid June
- Graze mid-summer and fall
- Feed hay back on pasture (ideally)
- Repeat



Annual Lespedeza

Established Pasture/Hay:

- Target lower fertility pastures
- Does well at low pH

Dedicated Field:

- Outstanding yields with med fertility
- Ready to cut by mid-July

#2
Purchase Hay

Purchase Hay Problems

- 1) Hard to find good hay
- 2) Expensive
→ Especially drought years
- 3) Bringing in weeds

Purchase Hay Advantages

- 1) Consistent high-quality hay
→ After developing contacts
- 2) Often cheaper than producing
- 3) Bring in fertility (for free)

Reducing Fertilizer Costs

#1

Use Legumes for Nitrogen

Advantages of Legumes

- 1) Increased yield without N fertilizer
- 2) Increased quality of overall forage
→ Particularly important with fescue

N Fertilizing

Cost:

50 lbs N x \$.40/unit = \$20.00/acre
Application Charge = \$6.00/acre
Total N Cost = \$26.00/acre

Benefit:

50 lbs N x 60 lbs dm /unit = 3000 lbs dm
= 1.5 tons

N Fertilizing

Cost per Ton =

Total N Cost = \$26
Additional Tons = 1.5
= \$17 / ton

Clover Seeding

Cost (Every 3 Years):

5 lbs red clover x \$3/lb = \$15.00/acre
1 lb ladino clover x \$4.50/lb = \$4.50/acre
Application Charge = \$6.00/acre

Total Cost (3 years) = \$25.50/acre

Total Cost (pro-rated) = \$8.50/acre

Clover Seeding

<u>Extra Prod. (per acre)</u>	<u>Cost/ton</u>
0.50 tons	\$17/ton
0.75 tons	\$11/ton
1.00 tons	\$9/ton
1.25 tons	\$7/ton
1.50 tons	\$6/ton
2.00 tons	\$4/ton



Why is N Still Used on Cattle Farms?

- Easier management
- Tradition
- Transition period

