Alternatives to Producing Own Hay

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#1 Hire Custom Hay Producer

Custom Hay Production

\$15-25 per roll \rightarrow \$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



Purchase Hay Problems

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

Purchase Hay Advantages

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

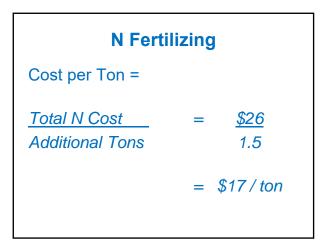
Reducing Fertilizer Costs #1 Use Legumes for Nitrogen

Advantages of Legumes

1) Increased yield without N fertilizer
 2) Increased quality of overall forage

 → Particularly important with fescue

N Fertilizing	
<u>Cost</u> : 50 lbs N x \$.40/unit Application Charge Total N Cost	= \$20.00/acre <u>= \$6.00/acre</u> = \$26.00/acre
<u>Benefit</u> : 50 lbs N x 60 lbs dm /unit	= 3000 lbs dm = 1.5 tons



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	= <u>\$6.00/acre</u>
Total Cost (3 years)	= \$25.50/acre
Total Cost (pro-rated)	= \$8.50/acre

Clover Seeding		
Extra Prod. (per acre)	Cost/ton	
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

