


# MESSENGER-INQUIRER

 Cooperative  
Extension Service



## Farm Update

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AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES  
EDUCATION

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### Optimum Conditions for Stockpiling Grass

In the last several years, there hasn't been a better opportunity to stockpile grass for winter grazing. If high nitrogen prices or dry soils have kept you from obtaining high-quality pasture for fall and early winter grazing, this year is your chance. Management decisions for optimum stockpiling include selecting fields with the best drainage and the highest percentage of tall fescue. Additionally, timing fertilizer for the most optimum yield potential, and planning grazing systems that will provide the most efficient utilization of the forage produced.

The best grass for stockpiling is a cool-season grass that will retain its green color and forage quality later into winter. In our area, that will be tall fescue. Early August is the time to begin stockpiling. Remove cattle, apply necessary fertilizer, and allow the grass to accumulate growth until November or December. Be sure that summer growth and weeds are grazed or mowed to 3 to 4 inches so that stockpile production comes from new grass regrowth. After frost, alfalfa-grass and clover-grass growth should be grazed before moving to grass fields.

A soil test should be taken to determine the phosphorus, potassium, and lime levels, then fertilize to meet the recommendations. Nitrogen should be topdressed at the rate of 40 to 100 actual units on tall fescue. When N was applied on August 15 and yields were taken in

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December, Kentucky researchers have shown that tall fescue yielded 24.4 pounds of dry matter produced for each pound of nitrogen applied.

## **Lime Spreader Rental Unit Available**

Low soil pH can be an issue in some pasture fields. It can often be challenging to get small acreages, or rough terrain applied with lime from commercial lime application services in a timely manner that meets your production goals. We are excited to announce that the Daviess County Soil Conservation Service, through a funding grant by the Kentucky Agricultural Development fund has purchased a heavy-duty lime spreader that can be used with a tractor greater than 75 horsepower. This spreader allows you to haul your own lime or have it delivered to the site, then apply it yourself. The Daviess County High School FFA Chapter has agreed to facilitate the scheduling and maintenance of the spreader. It will be housed at Daviess County High School. The spreader is available for a rent of \$100/day. This unit is for lime application only. It is not available for fertilizer or poultry litter application. For more information or to reserve the unit, contact DCHS FFA Advisor Craig Howard at (270) 499-0694.

## **Corn Stalk Nitrate Test**

Soil conditions have allowed for very good nitrogen use efficiency by the corn crop. This would be a good fall to conduct a stalk nitrate test in a few fields to see how close you were to optimum rates as a planning tool for next year. The end-of-season corn stalk nitrate test can help estimate the difference between the amount of nitrogen used by the crop and the actual nitrogen amount applied. Visual symptoms of leaf yellowing cannot always be used to determine if the corn is deficient in nitrogen.

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Plant samples should be collected as close to black layer as possible. Select 15 stalks per sample from the field in a manner similar to taking a soil sample. Avoid stalks affected by insects or diseases and stalks with small ears or no ears at all. Cut an 8-inch sample of stalk beginning 6 inches above the ground. Place the samples in a paper sack and take them to Waters Lab for analysis. Low stalk nitrate nitrogen test results are zero to 250 ppm, which means that nitrogen is more than likely deficient. A reading of 250-700 ppm is nitrogen availability close to “optimal” but could still lower yield. The optimal range is 700-2000 ppm. In this range, it is unlikely that yields would suffer as a result of insufficient nitrogen, although visual signs of nitrogen deficiency on lower leaves are often observed in this range. Excessive readings are more than 2000 ppm. Any test results that read 2000 ppm or higher means that more nitrogen was applied than was needed for maximum yields.

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