

Fescue Production for Forage

Fescue, a cool season grass, has two predominate growing seasons, early fall and late spring. Because of these growth patterns, there are two times to fertilize fescue. For enhanced fall growth, fertilize the last week of August or early September. Due to cooler temperatures and September rains, fescue will grow until we have a killing frost, usually mid to late November. This is about a 75 day growing season depending on the amount of fescue a producer needs, we generally recommend applying 60 to 120 pounds per acre of actual nitrogen plus phosphorus and potassium as called for by soil test. Fertilizer not utilized in the fall will be utilized in the spring by the fescue plant. By early to mid-March fescue will make rapid growth until approximately mid-May when it shoots a seed head and matures. To enhance spring growth of fescue, fertilize in late February.

Fescue is high in protein, and stockpiles and weathers well making it an excellent forage source for mid and late winter grazing.

Fescue will produce about 1600 pounds per acre without fertilizer. With fertility it is capable of producing 3000 to 5000 pounds per acre in the spring.

For more information on fescue, contact the Tulsa County OSU Extension Center, (918)746-3725.