

Pickens County Cattlemen's Association

222 West Main St., Pickens, SC 29671

Newsletter

Volume 12

July 1, 2016

Dr. Andrae Talks About Warm Season Annuals at April Meeting

by RD Morrison

PCCA President Amy Wilson introduced Dr. John Andrae at the April 19th meeting.

He pointed out that there are a lot of fescue pastures around and fescue is a cool season annual. What can be done to fill in the gap? Warm season annual grass. These are mainly used to fill a special need; are rapid growing, high quality, used in pasture renovation or emergency and stored forage. They are used to fill the gap from May to October when fescue is not growing. There are pros and cons to warm season annuals. The pros include the availability of seed, well adapted to the region, phenomenal production and usually good quality. The cons include that they should be established in a clean tilled soil, the fact that they are difficult to manage, and that they are expensive due to replanting each year (annual). Clean tilled is preferred because the residue harbors pests and shades light from the seedlings, but brown top millet and crabgrass can be no-tilled.

Dr. Andrae went over some of the attributes of several warm season annuals. Pearl millet is better than sorghum x sudan or sudangrass. Although it is a nitrate accumulator, there are no cyanide worries at frost and there are less prussic acid worries. It likes sandy soil with a pH of 5.8

(Continued on page 2)

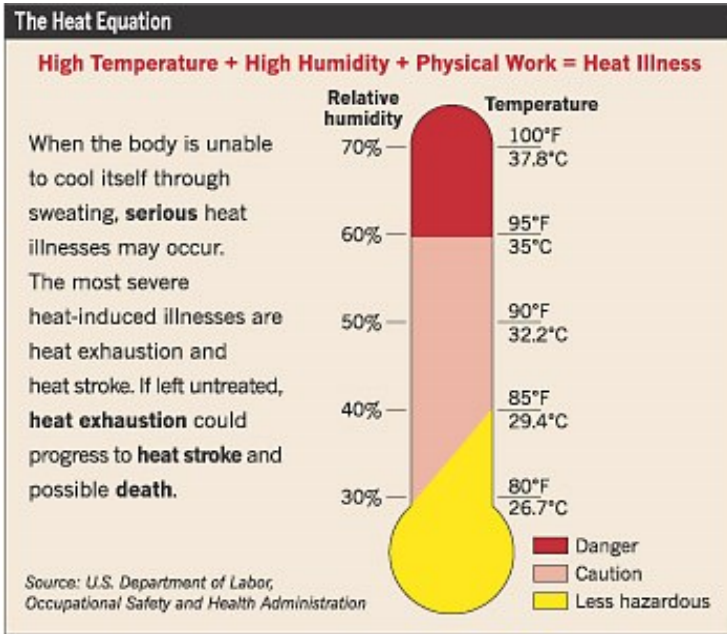
(Continued from page 1)

or higher. It grows 3—6 feet but grazing should start at 18-24 inches and should stop at 6 –8 inches as the reserves for regrowth are stored there. Sorghum x sudan is slightly taller and has a longer grazing period with a yield = /> millet. It is not as tolerant of acid soil and is less digestible. It accumulates nitrates and Prussic acid poisoning at frost is a concern. Sudangrass is similar to sorghum x sudan but is less productive and has a finer stem. It is a dual purpose grass—good for grazing or for haying. Browntop millet is a great energy crop for haying or grazing. It is tolerant of low pH and low fertility. Because it is an excellent seed producer, it may become a weed in crop land due to reseeding and the long seed viability. Crabgrass is a high quality, highly palatable grass and can dilute the toxins in Ky31 fescue. It is water dependant and responds well to nitrogen applications. It is difficult to establish but can be no-tilled and is expensive.

Dr. Andrae discussed nitrate and prussic acid poisoning. In sorghums and pearl millet, nitrates accumulate in the stems during drought and stress and the lower in the canopy, they higher the concentration. Prussic acid poisoning occurs only in sorghums (which includes Johnsongrass). IT accumulates during drought and frost stress.

In summary, warm season annual grasses should complement the other forages in the system. They may be expensive due to their annual establishment, but they are highly productive and can pay off with higher stocking rates and higher growth and milk. Some species are suited for sandy soils and some are suited for heavy soils. Finer stemmed species cure more easily for hay but the yield will be less.

Thank you, Dr. Andrae for this very informative meeting.



Drought Management

By James Rogers
The Noble Foundation

Drought can be defined simply as 75% of normal precipitation with the normal being based on a 30-year average. It can be further defined as long term, lasting for several months, or short term, which can last several weeks. Regardless of the length of time that drought occurs, the results can be far reaching and devastating for agricultural production.

Just about every climatic zone will experience drought at some point, and, drought is a normal, recurring part of the climate. No area of the lower 48 states has escaped drought, but the frequency varies by region.

Knowing that drought is a recurring feature of our climate, developing a management strategy to deal with drought should become part of grazing management. Recognizing the warning signs that a drought is about to occur or realizing that you are in a drought is difficult, but there is a large amount of forecast information available that can

help grazing managers manage drought.

Rainfall and climatic conditions vary greatly across geographic regions. Even within a climatic zone, normal yearly rainfall can vary dramatically across a distance of 50 miles or less. Therefore, it is important for grazing managers to become familiar with their local rainfall patterns and yearly temperature and precipitation norms.

A goal in drought management should be to develop the ability to plan ahead and manage a dry weather event and not to become managed by the event. By combining historical seasonal rainfall information with current weather data and by knowing seasonal forage production, a management plan can be formulated.

Strategy 1—Prior to drought, practice good grazing management. Good grazing management is the single most important drought management strategy and starts with determining the carrying capacity of the property. Carrying capacity is defined as the maximum stocking rate that a grazing resource can support without limiting the production of the animal or deteriorating the grazing resource. Simply put, match the forage demand of the grazing animals with the amount of forage produced on the property in a year. Long term, the proper stocking of a property not only buffers drought, but tends to be the most profitable grazing strategy as well.

If you have never determined the stocking rate for your property, here is a basic approach:

1. Determine the number of grazeable acres available in each pasture or paddock.
2. Determine potential forage production in each pasture or paddock. (NOTE: the NRCS and the Clemson Extension Service should be able to help determine this.)
- Determine animal demand. The amount of forage that a grazing animal can consume in a day is basically based on size—the larger the animal, the higher the forage demand per day. The amount of forage that an animal can consume is largely dependent upon the quality of the forage and the amount of forage available. Here are

(Continued from page 4)

some basic terms and values used to determine forage demand:

- Animal unit (AU) - defined as the amount of forage on a dry matter basis that a 1,000 pound cow will consume over a year.
 - Animal unit day (AUD) - in general, a beef cow will consume 2.6 to 3 percent of her body weight per day in dry matter. Therefore, if her weight is 1,000 lbs, then $1,000 \times 2.6$ to 3 percent = 26 to 30 pounds per day or 780 to 900 pounds per 30 days (1 month)
 - Animal unit year (UY) - By taking monthly consumption and multiplying by 12 (780 to 900 x 12 months), we can calculate that the forage demand for on AU is 9,360 to 10,800 pounds of dry matter per year.
4. Determine the amount of forage to be utilized. It is physically impossible to graze 100 percent of forage grown because of trampling, defecation, insects, etc. Nor do we want to graze 100 percent of forage grown since the amount of forage used directly affects plant regrowth, persistence and total yield. As a general rule, utilization of native grasses will run 25 to 30 percent and introduced grasses will be 65 to 70 percent if some type of rotational grazing is used.
 5. Do the math. If you have 100 acres of bermudagrass that have a yearly production of 6,000 pounds per acre and you expect 70 percent total forage utilization, this would equal 420,000 pounds (100 acres x 6,000 lb per acre x .70 utilization) of forage to graze for the year. To calculate the annual carrying capacity, divide 420,000 pounds of forage available by 10,000 pounds of forage demand (one AU) and you arrive at 42 head. We could stock our 100 acres with 42 head of 1,000 pound cows for a year. This number would then be adjusted up or down depending on the actual cow size.

Strategy 2—Prior to drought, use forages adapted to your environment. The forages that make up your

(Continued on page 6)

grazing operation need to be adapted to your environment and grazing management. If not, then forage production dry weather stress and stand thinning or loss is quite possible. When considering adding new forages to your operation, make sure they are adapted to your area.

Strategy 3 - When drought occurs, continue to practice good grazing management. When drought occurs, there is a tendency for many producers to open all the gates and allow animals to have free access to whatever they can find. This is the wrong approach to take because you lose management control. Keep gates closed and continue to practice rotation, but adjust the rotation to the speed of grass growth. This allows continued growth ahead of the rotation, and perhaps most importantly, it allows you to control the grazing intensity of pastures.

Strategy 4 - When drought occurs, inventory available forage. By measuring the amount of forage available that is yet to be grazed, you can calculate the number of reserve herd days available. This allows you to plan ahead and make sound decisions on de-stocking or purchasing additional feed based on forage inventory.

Strategy 5 - When drought occurs, monitor use of preferred plants. Areas that are heavily grazed can suffer plant loss during drought. These areas can be slow to recover after the drought has ended. Native grass pastures can be slow to recover after a drought if they have been overgrazed. By stocking conservatively, during a drought, recovery is much quicker afterwards. If necessary, be prepared to move to a “sacrifice pasture” to preserve sensitive areas.

Strategy 6 - When drought occurs, monitor animal health. Monitor animal body condition and health. If body condition begins to slip, it is difficult and expensive to put it back on without good forage availability. Be aware of plants in pastures that can cause animal toxicity problems during times of drought. Plants that are nitrate accumulators or have the potential of developing prussic acid such as johnsongrass, sorghum, sudan grass, milo and

(Continued from page 6)

others should be noted and animal access monitored.

Strategy 7 - When drought occurs, keep some fertility on introduced pastures. Introduced forages, especially bermudagrass, can greatly increase their water use efficiency by adding some fertilizer so that when you do get rain, you grow more grass. Be wise in the application. Fertilize only the most productive soils and most productive grasses, and cut back on normal application.

Strategy 8 - When drought occurs, monitor insect pressure. Unfortunately, dry weather conditions often coincide with ideal conditions for the development of high populations of forage eating insects such as grasshoppers, armyworms and others. These insects can consume large amounts of forage when populations explode, and this is forage that you cannot afford to lose.

Strategy 9 - When drought occurs, destock if necessary. Don't be afraid to destock if necessary to preserve your grazing resource. However, if destocking becomes necessary, do so in a logical order. The goal in destocking should be to preserve cattle that are in their prime and can make you the most money when conditions improve. Have a detailed culling strategy.

Strategy 10 - After drought has occurred, it is not full steam ahead. After drought has occurred, conditions do not immediately return to normal. Pastures can be weak and stand losses could have occurred. Implement a grazing plan and allow ample rest for pastures to recover. Some pastures may require total deferment for a period of time to allow adequate recovery. Re-calculate your carrying capacity based on current levels of forage production. Restock slowly and as forage conditions improve.

Summary - A good drought management plan starts long before drought occurs. A thorough plan will encompass management strategies for before, during and after a drought. The single most important long term drought

(Continued on page 8)

management strategy is to calculate and implement an appropriate carrying capacity for the property.

Mike Hall Wins Stihl Chainsaw

By RD Morrison

Mike Hall won the Stihl 180 chainsaw that the PCCA raffled off to help the Pickens County 4-H and the Pickens County Career and Technology Center FFA. Mike's ticket was drawn by Olivia Knightner out of the hundreds of tickets that were sold. The PCCA would like to thank each and every one of the folks that bought tickets for their support. The money has already been award to these organizations. We would like to thank Billy Bryant at AgPro in Williamston for allowing the PCCA to purchase this prize at a really reasonable price. We, also, urge Mike to be careful while using his new chainsaw. Congratulations, Mike.



RD Morrison with Mike Hall holding his winning ticket at the PCCA Advertisers appreciation dinner held at the PCCTC.

PCCA Supporters Appreciation Dinner Was Appreciated By All

By RD Morrison



The 2016 PCCA Supporters Appreciation Dinner was a resounding success. Approximately 160 people were in attendance to meet with advertisers in the Directory. Many advertisers had booths and were

very willing to talk with members. Many of our equipment advertisers brought tractors and equipment including AgPro (John Deere), Coastal Carolina Supply (Mahindra), Oakway Tractor (Kubota), Powell Tractor (Massey Ferguson) and Haney Farm & Ranch (Case iH). The Smoking Pig catered the meal and, according to those in attendance, it was excellent. Thanks to all of the officers and board members.

PCCA Booth at 2016 Pickens Azalea Festival A Huge Success

By RD Morrison



The PCCA had a nice presence at the Azalea Festival again this year. A special thanks goes out to Mike King as he let us borrow his big Charolais bull (formerly a Bi-Lo bull). It got a lot of 'selfies' and brought a lot of folks over

to our booth so we could talk to them about the ZIP (zinc, iron and protein) that beef provides. A special thanks to the SC Beef Council for supporting us in this endeavor. Last, but not least, a very special thanks to all the folks that manned the booth and met with prospective beef eaters.

2016 Directories Now Available

By RD Morrison

The 2016 PCCA Directories are now available. Many were handed out to the members that attended the PCCA Advertisers Appreciation Dinner in May. If you were not in attendance, you probably didn't get one. No worries. Contact RD Morrison at 864-907-6837 or by e-mail at rdm95573@bellsouth.net. We will work something out on how to get your Directory to you.

This years Directory is bigger and better than ever. We have added color ads to the Directory and they were well received by our advertisers. As usual, there is a section for notes, calf birth data, nice to know information addition, and politician contact information in addition to the membership information.

The officers and directors of the PCCA encourages all of our members to support our advertisers and to thank them for supporting the PCCA.

*Thoughts from the President -
Amy Finley Wilson*



It seems that we are entering a drought again this year. In our part of the country, it has turned bad very quickly with fields turning brown in a weeks time. Fortunately, we made it through hay season but, unfortunately, we may have to feed hay now instead of in the winter which will pose more problems if we don't have a fall hay crop. Doesn't seem like a good time to have cattle, especially with prices down and not looking for improvement, but it all can change quickly and there are things we can do to hedge against bad times.

I believe that we should all take this as an opportunity to look at our systems to see how we can improve them.

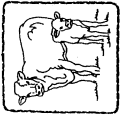
There are many resources that we can and should be utilizing. This association is a great place to start along with our local extension office. We are fortunate to have Lindsey Craig, our livestock agent, located in Pickens to help us.

Sometimes, it is hard to figure out where to start and the more you learn, the harder it gets. If your pastures are overgrazed, start with getting your herd down to the right size because no matter what you do, if you have too many animals, you will not be able to do anything with your pastures. Next, incorporate some type of rotation. Divide what pastures you have into two, three, four fields, whatever money and time allow you to do. Let your grass grow and try to always leave 3 to 4 inches. It's all about the effort, any, and it will help you move forward. As you start to see some results, then you can start incorporating other methods such as cover crops. Many of you are already doing these things well and we would like to know about your practices. For those that need direction, please contact us so we can pass along any information we have.

June and July will be Junior meetings, but of course everyone is invited to attend. Our regular PCCA meetings will start again in August. They will be diverse and informative but please let us know of any topics you would like to see.

Have a good summer and we will see you in August.
Amy Wilson

PCCA Synopsis Report	SCCA dues	\$520.00
for period as of 6/27/16 -	Donation	\$1042.35
PCCA Balance as of 6/16/16:	Sam's Club	\$45.00
	Postage	\$104.00
	Printing	\$2258.11
INCOME:	Azalea Festival	\$55.00
Ads	Meals	\$2518.03
Dues	Website	\$945.00
Reimbursed	Raffle	\$224.27
Raffle	Repairs	\$87.95
EXPENSES:		



**Pickens County
Cattlemen's Association**
222 West Main St.
Pickens, SC 29671