

Improve Pastures by Renovating

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Beef cattle need quality forage if they are to meet their genetic potential. Renovation of pastures and hay fields can be utilized to improve forage quality.

Reestablishing pastures and hay fields is expensive and not practical in most situations. This is the reason that renovation is the best option for improving forage quality.

Renovation is a relatively simple process. In Tennessee the best time to put clovers in pastures is February 15 to March 15.

To prepare for renovation the pastures need to be grazed down relatively close. If some soil is not visible then a disk or chemicals can be used to destroy a portion of the sod. It is critical that there is an opening in the sod where the seeds can come into contact with the soil.

The next step is to sew the clover. The seed can be broadcast during the recommended seeding time. If seeding is a little late then drilling into the sod is recommended. Be careful to not place the seed too deep.

The seed mixture should include two pounds of white clover and four pounds of red clover. Eight pounds of lespedeza can be added if the soil is expected to be very dry in late summer. Cattle need to be kept off the renovated field a minimum of six weeks.

Remember that adding clover not only improve the quality of feed for animals, it also adds about 60 pounds of nitrogen to the soil.

Check with your local Extension Agent for variety information and other questions about renovation.