

### **Stockpiling Tall Fescue**

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Winter feeding is the most expensive part of beef cattle production. Producers need to use every technique possible to shorten the winter feeding period and reduce the winter feed costs. Stockpiling fescue can lengthen the fall grazing season and thus reduce the length of the winter feeding period. Stockpiling or pasture accumulation during the fall is relatively easy. A discussion of stockpiling fescue follows:

**Why stockpile?** Research has shown that the fall growth of tall fescue will maintain sufficient quality to meet cow needs into January or February. Stockpiling the fall growth for later grazing will enable cattle to graze during the winter, which is the most difficult time of the year to maintain body condition. Plan to stockpile approximately one acre of fescue per mature animal.

#### **Stockpiled tall fescue will:**

- ▶ Provide 45-60 days extra grazing in fall.
- ▶ Maintain quality into early winter.
- ▶ Be higher in quality than the average hay in Tennessee.
- ▶ Cost half as much as the same amount of forage harvested and stored as hay.

#### **Selecting pastures for Stockpiling:**

- ▶ Select a fescue pasture that has a little or no clover
- ▶ Select a pasture that has a good stand of fescue
- ▶ Select a pasture that has good fertility and will respond to nitrogen fertilization.

**Steps for stockpiling tall fescue:**

1. Clip or graze pastures in mid-August to remove all summer growth.
2. When fall rains begin, apply 180 lb. ammonium nitrate per acre.
3. Keep cattle off pasture until after frost. Strip graze field to decrease waste.

Utilize the following table to determine the amount of nitrogen fertilizer needed in each field and the total amount need for the fall stockpiling program.

Fertilization Plan for Stockpiling Fescue

Field #	(1) No. Acres	(2) Pounds N/Acre	(3) Fertilizer % N <sup>1</sup>	(4) Pounds of Fertilizer/Acre $2/3 * 100$	Fertilizer Total $4 * 1$

<sup>1</sup>Ammonium Nitrate = 34% N

Additional information on beef cattle nutrition can be obtained by contacting your local Extension Service office.