Pasture Forage Species:
Perennials

Mat Haan
Penn State Extension
Extension Dairy Educator

Dan Ludwig
NRCS
Grazing Specialist

Types of Forages
- Cool Season Grasses
- Warm Season Grasses
- Legumes

Cool Season Grasses
- Most common grasses that are grown
- Perennial plants that grow year after year
- Have two growth periods
  - Spring flush
  - Late summer growth
- Can be used to graze livestock during the entire grazing season

Pasture Species Production

Common Cool Season Forages
- Orchardgrass
- Kentucky Bluegrass
- Perennial Ryegrass
- Reed Canarygrass
- Tall Fescue
- Timothy
- Smooth Bromegrass
- Festulolium
- Meadow Bromegrass
- Meadow Fescue

Orchardgrass
- Seed rate: 8-10 lbs per acre
- Easy to establish
- Mixes well with legumes
- Bunch type grass
- "Tekapo" variety is a sod former
Kentucky Bluegrass
- Seed rate: 4 lbs per acre
- Tolerates close frequent grazing
- Forms dense sod
- Mixes well with legumes
- Goes dormant in hot, dry weather

Perennial Ryegrass
- Seed rate: 4-8 lbs per acre
- Easy to establish
- Mixes well with legumes
- Low drought tolerance
- Great for early spring grazing

Reed Canarygrass
- Seed at 14 lbs/ac
- Sod forming grass
- Tolerates wet soils
- Drought Tolerant
- Hard to establish
- Requires taller stubble height

Tall Fescue
- Seed rate: 10-12 lbs per acre
- Genetically modified varieties are available to reduce susceptibility to fescue toxicity
- Drought tolerant
- Tolerates heavy hoof traffic

Timothy
- Seed rate: 4 lbs/ac
- Easy to establish
- Does not tolerate close and frequent grazing
- Managed stands only last 3-4 years
- Timothy mites could be a problem

Smooth Bromegrass
- Seed at 6-8 lbs/ac
- Fairly easy to establish
- Does not tolerate close and frequent grazing
- Better suited for hay production
Festulolium

- Hybrid of Perennial Ryegrass and Fescue
  - Meadow fescue
  - Tall fescue
- Can have resistance to summer slump
- Spring growth is comparable to Perennial Ryegrass
- Livestock may selectively graze some varieties

Warm Season Grasses

- Switchgrass
- Big Bluestem
- Eastern Gammagrass

Warm Season Grasses

- Typically implemented into a grazing season to provide forages while cool season grasses are in the “summer slump”
- WSG start growing in May and provide the majority of their forage yields in June, July, and August
- Perennial forages that don’t need to be planted every year

Pasture Species Production

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<tr>
<th>April</th>
<th>May</th>
<th>June</th>
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Switchgrass

- Fairly easy to establish
- Can be planted with a regular drill
- Seed at 8-10 lbs/ac. PLS
- Should be seeded as a pure stand
- Can be grazed down to 6-8 inches

Big Bluestem

- Difficult to establish
- Need WSG drill or conventionally prepared seed bed
- Seed at 10-12 lbs/ac PLS
- Takes 2 years to get stand established
Eastern Gamma Grass
- Difficult to establish
- Tough seed coat makes germination hard
- Seed usually needs to be chilled for 8-10 weeks prior to planting
- Once established, well suited and high performing grazing forage

Legumes
- Typically implemented into grazing systems to add nitrogen to the soil and can add protein and digestible fiber to livestock diets
- Legumes fix atmospheric nitrogen to the soil for themselves and other plants to use
- Legumes are added to pasture mixes in low amounts due to bloat potential

Legumes
- Alfalfa
- Clover
  - Red Clover
  - White Clover
- Birdsfoot Trefoil

Alfalfa
- Seed at 4-8 lbs/ac
- Can be frost seeded through no-tilling
- Add N to the soil and protein to the diet
- Best suited for rotational grazing systems
- Can cause bloat

Red Clover
- Seed at 2 lbs/ac
- Easy to establish through no-till
- Can be frost seeded
- Adds N to soil and protein to diet
- Low drought tolerance
- Can cause bloat

White Clover (Large)
- Seed at 1 lb/ac
- Can be frost seeded
- Can be grazed down to 1 inch
- Adds N to soil and protein to diet
- Spreads through stolons
**Birdsfoot Trefoil**

- Can be difficult to establish
- Seed at 6-8 lbs/ac
- Best suited for rotational grazing systems
- Better animal performance than alfalfa
- Does not cause bloat in livestock

**Questions?**

Mat Haan  
Penn State Extension  
Dairy Educator - Berks County  
1238 County Welfare Road  
Leesport, PA 19533  
610-378-1327  
mmh29@psu.edu

Dan Ludwig  
NRCS  
Grazing Specialist (SE)  
2120 Cornwall Road  
Lebanon, PA 17042  
717/274-2597 ext. 119  
dan.ludwig@pa.usda.gov