

AGRONOMY

UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA
IFAS EXTENSION

NOTES

November, 2004

IN THIS ISSUE

COTTON

Cotton Yields and Yield Potential	2
---	---

FORAGE

Forage Testing	2
Get Ready to Burn	2
Get Ready Now to Plant Perennial Peanut in February or March	3
Overseeding Warm Season Perennials with Cool Season Annuals	3
Pastures: Should You Spray in November?	4
Should Cover Crops Be Used or Should Fields Be Kept Clean With Residual Herbicides Over the Winter?	5

PEANUTS

National Peanut Referendum Approved	5
Peanut Yields	5

TOBACCO

Growing Tobacco in 2005	5
Tobacco Market Report	6
Tobacco Quota Buyout	6

MISCELLANEOUS

October Crop Report	6
---------------------------	---

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Employment Opportunity - Affirmative Action Employer authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function without regard to race, color, sex, age, handicap or national origin. For information on obtaining other extension publications, contact your county Cooperative Extension Office. Florida Cooperative Extension Service / Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences / University of Florida / Larry Arrington, Interim Dean.

Cotton Yields and Yield Potential

This year has been tough for cotton growers in the main cotton growing counties.

Hurricanes have blown cotton out of open bolls and resulted in cotton being tangled and hard to pick. However, the amount of hardlock for the year is very similar to average years, with about 30% of the bolls being hardlocked and the cotton cannot be picked and is knocked on the ground as the picker passed through the field. Some fields that are wetter have had as much as 50-60% of the cotton hardlocked. Many growers who have picked fields that averaged 1000 lbs/A of lint will still lose 300-500 lbs/A from hardlock. Our research has shown hardlock to be caused by Fusarium fungi infecting blooms. While much of Florida cotton has a potential of three bales or more per acre, we end of harvesting a little over a bale/acre each year. Fungicides applied during bloom helps this problem but it has not solved the entire problem. Additional research with thrips is underway to determine how they impact hardlock. Other insects such as stinkbug can result in more hardlock, but they can be controlled. With Florida being one of the smallest cotton growing states of the 15 states in the cotton belt, hardlock results in a \$20 million loss each year in an average year like this and may be more than double that in years such as 2002.

DLW

Forage Testing

Due to the extended period of wet weather this summer, hay harvests were delayed allowing plants to become overly mature, resulting in reduced nutritional value of the hay. Much of this hay may need to be fed with greater than normal amounts of protein

and energy supplements in order to meet the nutritional needs of your livestock.

You may be interested in knowing the nutritional content of your hay. The U. of F. IFAS Extension Service no longer tests hay, but there are several good labs that can do the job at a moderate cost. Consult the fact sheet "Forage Testing" which can be found at the web site,

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/AA192> or pick up a copy at the county extension office. This fact sheet will provide information on how to collect a sample, and where to send it, etc. One of the popular labs is Dairy One which has the following web site:
<http://www.dairyone.com/Forage/services/Forage/forage.htm>.

Auburn University operates a forage testing lab within their soil testing facility. Information is available at this web site:
<http://www.ag.auburn.edu/dept/ay/soiltest.htm>.

CGC

Get Ready to Burn

Get ready now to burn bermudagrass hay fields and pastures in order to reduce spittlebug:

Due to the hurricanes, timely harvest was delayed in many hay fields allowing for build up of spittlebug and various diseases. Spittlebug eggs and disease inoculum may carry over the winter and affect next years crop. Burning the hay field in early spring at green up can reduce the amount of spittlebug eggs and disease inoculum.

If you do not have experience with burning, check with the local county forester or others who have experience with or knowledge of the proper methods to use. Be

prepared so that when conditions are correct for burning you will not be delayed. Fields should be burned just before green up. This will catch and kill some of the early germinating weeds as well as reduce the spittlebug infestation. Try to burn after a rain while the soil surface is moist and burn with the wind. This will reduce the chances that the fire might get too hot and damage the forage plants.

See the publication “Insect Management in Pastures” by Dr. Richard Sprengel for additional information on spittlebug. It can be found at the following web site <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/IG/IG06100.pdf> Regulations related to the use of fire are discussed in the publication “Prescribed burning regulations” by Dr. Allen Long. The publication can be found at the web site <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/FR/FR05500.pdf>

CGC

Get Ready Now to Plant Perennial Peanut in February or March

If you want to establish a new planting of perennial peanut, start planning now. Check out the revised source list for planting material. See the fact sheet “Perennial Peanut - Source List of Planting Material (Rhizomes) and Hay” which can be found on EDIS, <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/index.html> (home page) or <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/AG/AG10500.pdf> for publication.

If you want to establish the new planting on a bahiagrass sod, you will need to spray the sod with Roundup herbicide now (before frost) in order to kill the bahiagrass. Apply Roundup herbicide 3 to 6 weeks before the first expected frost. This should allow enough time to absorb the Roundup and kill the plants. Yes, kill the bahiagrass. If you don't kill the bahiagrass, it will compete

with the peanut seedlings during the spring for soil moisture which is very critical for establishment of the peanut.

If you want to establish on a clean tilled seedbed, you will need to do the primary tillage in November or December. This will allow some time for plant material to rot before final seedbed preparation and planting. Be ready to plant in February and March. [Irrigate to guarantee successful establishment.](#)

CGC

Overseeding Warm Season Perennials with Cool Season Annuals (thoughts for 2004)

We are going into the fall with plenty of moisture throughout the state. The hurricanes brought lots of rain. El Nino promises to bring more. This could be a successful year for cool season annual forages. But, remember that on our sandy soils we can dry out about as fast as we can get wet — therefore, “it is not a sure thing”.

When overseeding pastures or hay fields, wait until growth slows and remove all excess forage by grazing or mechanical harvest before planting. Overseeding works best where there is plentiful soil moisture throughout the growing season. This is more likely to occur in northwest Florida and less likely to occur in the southern peninsula due to rainfall patterns. In fact overseeding is generally not recommended in the southern peninsula especially on bahiagrass. Site or soil type also plays an important role in successfully growing cool season annuals and therefore must be carefully selected. Clay soils, sandy soils underlain by clay, (and moist flatwoods soils in some locations) produce the best results. Of course if irrigation is available, these forages can be grown almost anywhere.

Overseeding bahiagrass pastures: The bahiagrass sod should be cultivated to obtain 30 to 50 percent disturbance when overseeding. This will reduce the bahiagrass competition with the ryegrass or clover seedlings. Ryegrass overseeding on bahiagrass in the southern peninsular is successful in some years (one out of 10 ?), but small grains are rarely if ever successful.

Overseeding bermudagrass hay fields in northern Florida: If overseeding is done with the intention of harvesting the crop as hay or silage, then overseeding with small grains and/or crimson clover may work best as compared to ryegrass. Ryegrass has a longer growing season and will compete with the bermudagrass in the spring especially if it is allowed to accumulate for harvesting as hay or silage. This competition may be detrimental to the bermudagrass stand. On the other hand, if it is grazed, then the competition may be controlled.

Overseeding Perennial Peanut: If overseeding for hay production or grazing, again oats or one of the other small grains or crimson clover would be the better choices. I have seen crimson clover overseeded on a small perennial peanut pasture and used for creep grazing that was very successful.

CGC

Pastures: Should You Spray in November?

The summer of 2004 has been very wet across much of Florida. Rainfall came very frequently and often in large amounts. This led many pasture managers to delay herbicide applications, waiting for the dryer weather of the late summer. However, multiple hurricanes disrupted these plans as well. Now it is November and some herbicides were never applied. The question

arises: Should these herbicides be applied now, this winter, next spring, or early next summer?

November is often a bad time to apply pasture herbicides. This is because the summer annual weeds have already produced seed and are dying, but the germination and growth of winter species is not yet sufficient to warrant herbicide treatment. At this point of the year it may be better if herbicide applications are delayed until next season.

However, we should not forget the value of making a winter application. Winter applications can be greatly beneficial. Winter annual species, such as wild radish and thistle, are most easily controlled before the plants bolt and begin to produce flowers. Late January or February is often the best time to control these species. Herbicide applications made when daytime temperatures are >50F will work best. Controlling these weeds when small is often a highly effective and inexpensive way to improve grazing areas into early summer.

Spring applications can be very difficult throughout Florida. As the pastures transition out of winter and weeds begin to grow, many will want to begin spraying. However, March and April are often very dry and drought stressed weeds are common. Drought stress can dramatically decrease herbicide activity and poor weed control will likely be observed. I often recommend that if soils are excessively dry, herbicides be applied in May after the summer rains begin.

If you were unable to apply herbicides this summer due to the weather, delaying until next summer (unless you wish to control winter weeds) may be the best way to gain the maximum effectiveness from your herbicides.

JAF

Should Cover Crops Be Used or Should Fields Be Kept Clean With Residual Herbicides Over the Winter?

Much research has shown that soil productivity is reduced with loss of soil organic matter. Organic matter is built by cover, row and forage crops. It is generally understood that mixed crop production will increase organic matter more than cropping one or two crops. While it is true that cover crops use nutrients and can tie up nitrogen and other nutrients in the winter, it also keeps these nutrients from leaching or being eroded. Biological activity is enhanced with the use of winter cover crops which includes earthworms and other environmentally friendly factors. It is good to have the cover crop and weeds killed about 4 weeks ahead of planting, but it is not generally good to have the fields cover crop free for any longer than that. Fields with bermudagrass used for row crop production can be sprayed in the late fall before frost and before the row crops germinate to help control this grass for the next crop year.

DLW

National Peanut Referendum Approved

At an approval rate of 87 percent, peanut farmers in the United States voted to keep the national peanut checkoff program for

another five years. Funds collected through this program are used to support promotion and research activities.

EBW

Peanut Yields

Estimated average Florida peanut yields for 2004 were much lower in the October USDA report than they were a month earlier, and also much lower than for other states. Damage from the hurricanes that hit Florida in September are the likely reason for the reduced estimates. The November report may be a better reflection of yield prospects, with the final estimate in January probably being the most accurate.

EBW

Growing Tobacco in 2005

Since the tobacco quota buyout is now law, many farmers need to decide if they will grow tobacco next year. It is expected that contracts for tobacco produced in 2005 should be available in the next couple of months. At this time there is no information on the prices that tobacco buyers will offer or quantities they want for next year. In the meantime, growers should determine the minimum price that they would accept, and the quantities that they would be willing to grow. There is no information as to whether or not there will be auction markets available for tobacco sales next year, but that information should also be forthcoming in the next few weeks. Keep in mind that there will be no price supports, or restrictions on quantity or location where the tobacco can be grown. It would be advisable that growers arrange for marketing prior to planting the crop.

EBW

Tobacco Market Report

Flue-cured tobacco sales for 2004 are almost complete, with about 124 million pounds being sold at auction for an average price of \$1.7962. Over 73 percent of the tobacco offered at auction went into the loan program. Almost 370 million pounds were sold under contract at an average price of \$1.8594. The two Florida contract centers bought over 9 million pounds for \$1.8490.

EBW

Tobacco Quota Buyout

The US House of Representatives and the Senate recently passed legislation that would end the current tobacco quota program. This action became law when it was signed by the President. Under this legislation, quota owners will receive \$7 per pound and growers \$3 per pound. The 2002 basic quota would be the basis for payments, and quota owners that also grew the tobacco would receive both payments. Starting in 2005, the payments would be paid over a ten-year period with funding from tobacco companies, based on market share of sales. The tobacco company payments will be made quarterly to a 'Tobacco Trust Fund' administered by the Commodity Credit Corporation, an agency of the USDA. Payments would then be made annually to the eligible recipients. Reportedly there are over 4000 recipients in Florida, as quota owners from other states have moved here.

It is estimated that there is a total of over 400,000 recipients in all 50 states and in several foreign countries. There will be no controls or support prices on tobacco grown in 2005, and there are no geographical limitations on where tobacco could be grown.

EBW

October Crop Report

The National Agricultural Statistics Service of USDA reported that the estimates of October 1 indicated that the United States would produce record crops of corn, soybeans, and cotton in 2004. The corn crop is expected to be 11.6 billion bushels, which is 15% above 2003, the previous record year. Average yields are expected to be 158.4 bushels per acre, which is 16.2 bushels above the 2003 yield, which was also a previous record. The largest producing states, Illinois and Iowa, expect average yields of 180 bushels per acre. Soybean production is forecast to be 3.11 billion bushels, which is 27% above 2003, and yields are expected to be a record 42 bushels per acre. The 2004 cotton crop is expected to be 21.5 million bales, or 18% above 2003, and yields are expected to be a record 782 pounds per acre. Monthly estimates of these crops are not made in Florida, but the following estimates of other crops were made:

Crop	Florida		United States	
	Harvested Acres (x1000)	Yield per Acre	Harvested Acres (x1000)	Yield per Acre
Peanuts	130	2300 lb	1,388	2972 lb
Tobacco, flue-cured	4	2500 lb	229	2237 lb
Sugarcane, sugar and seed	420	36 ton	961.6	31.5 ton

EBW

The use of trade names does not constitute a guarantee or warrant of products named and does not signify approval to the exclusion of similar products.
 Prepared by: J. M. Bennett, Chairman; C. G. Chambliss, Extension Agronomist; J.A. Ferrell, Extension Agronomist, G. E. MacDonald, Weed Researcher, M. B. Adjei, Forage Agronomist, E. B. Whitty, Extension Agronomist, D. L. Wright, Extension Agronomist.