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American Potash Institute Gives Some Keys To Fall Forage Fertility Questions

1—How can I cut costs . . . most profitable — \$171.07 per acre, Texas tests showed.

You can shoot for a higher yield from each acre. In Pennsylvania a 4-ton hay yield cost around \$19 per ton to produce. But the 6-ton yield cost only \$12—or \$7 LESS per ton when the yield increased 2 tons per acre.

2—Quantity of forage is not the only answer, is it?

No, sir. True forage value is determined by quantity AND QUALITY. You can best express feeding value through the energy and protein your crop can give animals. Say you are testing four fertilizer rates, for example. Yields from the third rate (next to top) showed most profit from yield—\$28.32 per acre. But when you add the value of digestible protein to the profit picture, the fourth or highest rate becomes

3—How important is QUALITY in forage, really?

Quality means the difference between profit and loss. It affects the performance of your animal PLUS the amount of grain you must purchase. Take an alfalfa-brome hay, for example. With GOOD quality, a farmer had to add only 3 lbs grain per day to insure 41 lbs milk per day. With POOR quality hay, he had to add 18 lbs grain to get only 20 lbs. milk—OR 50% LESS MILK WITH 6 TIMES THE GRAIN. That clearly says one thing: "Profit depends on quality."

4—How does forage stack up with grain as a quality feed?

Great! Take alfalfa, for ex-

ample. A 10-ton yield gives the energy (TDN) found in 315 bu. of corn or 10.5 tons of corn silage PLUS the protein in 715 bu. of corn or 150 bu. of soybeans. That means even a 5 ton alfalfa yield adds up to a lot of corn and soybeans!

5—Which management step will pay best for me?

That's hard to say. But experts agree most dairy and livestock farmers can increase forage production . . . grow it more efficiently, more economically . . . by doing a better job of liming and fertilizing.

6—How big a difference can fertilizer make?

A big difference! It takes just as much money and labor to plow, plant, spray and fence for low yields as for high yields—and just as much land! It costs about \$55-65 per acre to establish alfalfa. Figure \$20 for fertilizer and lime out of this: 50 lbs P2O5

and 225 lbs. K2O. The other costs are essentially fixed. So, it pays to fertilize enough to do a top-yield job with all the other costs involved.

7—What about fertilizing pastures? Will it pay me?

Yes. Leaders say the evidence is clear. For example, fertilizing Coastal Bermudagrass increased beef production from 259 lbs. to 684 lbs. per acre per year. In net profit, this meant \$30 per acre, \$300 every 10 acres, \$3,000 on a 100-acre operation. In other words, the \$35 spent for fertilizer produced an ADDITIONAL 425 lbs. of beef from each acre. This Georgia grass was fertilized with 200 lbs. of nitrogen and 500 lbs. of 0-10-20 yearly.

In another study, \$14 worth of fertilizer per acre on alfalfa brome pasture returned \$55.33 in additional beef gain—\$3.69 return on every dollar invested.

In another trial, \$21 worth of fertilizer boosted permanent pasture profit more than \$77 per acre.

Fertilizing clover-grass pastures can produce big dividends. About \$15 worth of fertilizer and lime per acre—sometimes more—can produce up to 2 tons EXTRA forage under many conditions. COST: \$1,500 fertilizer bill each year on a 100-acre operation. RETURN: 300,000 EXTRA lbs. of milk or nearly \$18,000 increase. This could happen IF the extra forage is properly used, experiment station agronomists say.

8—How much nutrition will my forage crop need?

All high-yielding forages have a big appetite for plant nutrients. But they vary in their demands. For example, 8 tons of alfalfa removes 982 lbs. of nitrogen, phosphate, and potash per acre . . . 30 tons of corn silage 525 lbs. . . 45 tons of clover-grass 420 lbs. . . 6 tons of cool season

(Continued on Page 25)



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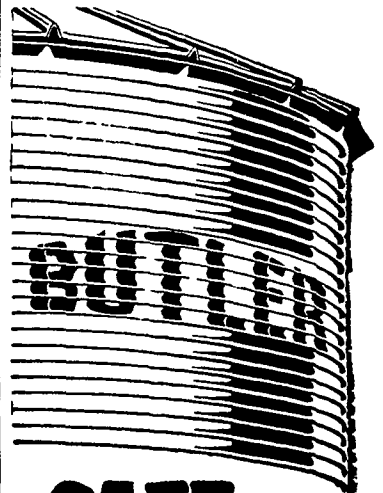
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