

Sudangrass Is Excellent Supplemental Pasture in Summer

By Max Smith
County Ag Agent

Pastures probably look good right now, but how will they produce in July and August?

If your pastures are like most, they'll probably need help this summer from supplemental pasture, and Piper sudangrass is the best summer seeded annual pasture crop.

Piper sudangrass, seeded at the rate of 30 pounds per acre, will generally be ready to graze six to seven weeks after plant-

ing. It is a warm weather crop, so it should not be seeded until the soil is warm, probably June 1 or later. It can be planted as late as July 1, but will not produce maximum yields when seeded this late.

How much should you plant? Under normal conditions, when grown primarily for supplemental summer pasture, we recommend planning for about one acre of sudan for each four mature animals you plan to graze. When considering sudan-

grass of silage, green feeding or hay, you can expect a yield of about 10 tons of green forage or 3 tons of dry hay per acre.

Of the varieties tried in Pennsylvania, Piper is still one of the best. It is high in yield, leafy, relatively resistant to leaf diseases, and low in prussic acid. Several sorghum-sudan hybrids produce high yields under Pennsylvania conditions, but appear to be somewhat higher in prussic acid than Piper.

Sudangrass responds to a

complete mixed fertilizer in much the same manner as corn

It will produce the highest yields, be more evenly grazed and better utilized if divided into two or more areas, each being grazed off in rotations and given a chance to recover. Plantings may also be staggered at 7 to 10 day intervals to even out the grazing season.

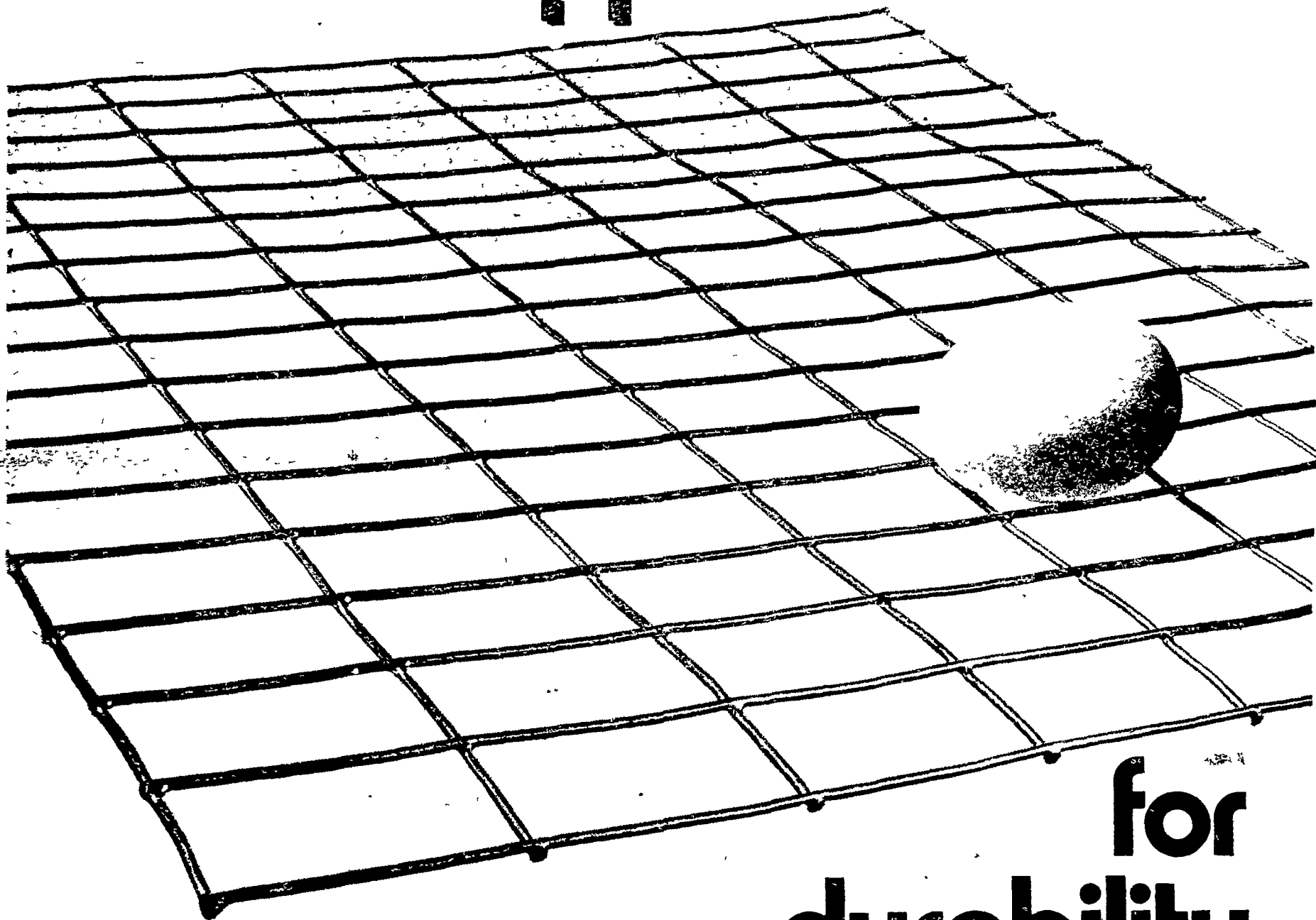
Do not turn cattle on sudangrass until the plants are about 18 inches tall. If properly managed, two or three periods of

grazing are possible during the season.

High quality pasture from tall-growing perennial grass-legume mixtures, or silage made from surplus early pasture, is normally more economical than sudangrass, providing there is enough of these to maintain steady forage production through the summer.

If pasture is normally scarce on your farm in July and August, consider sudan as a very valuable crop.

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