



Grazing corns in the foreground, with cows feeding on previously grazed corn in the background. In this photo, it is evident where the corn is growing and where cows continue to consume most all the plant. And it show that cows will consume it!



A Jersey cow feeds on corn leaves at the Pat Shea Farm in Shartlesville.

Corn Grazing Supplements

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crops to supplement the cool season crops. This recommendation is for graziers that have high stocking rates or are on drought-prone soils.

Grazing corn is one such annual. We have experienced two seasons with grazing corn, grown on shale soils. In 1996, Brian and Karen Mohn, PAPA Farm, Bethel, successfully used corn for grazing with their commercial cow-calf herd.

Cows readily consumed corn planted on eight acres. The corns used were Baldrige Grazing Maize and the hybrid corn selected by the Mohns. Baldrige Grazing Maize is a corn selected for grazing and forage feed value and is available from Baldrige Hybrids, Cherry Fork, Ohio.

We were confident that cows would accept the corn, so we decided to expand our experience with grazing corn. In 1997, Pat Shea, Hamburg, planted 14 acres of corn for grazing, using three different planting dates. He also compared two different corns - a silage corn and Baldrige Grazing Maize. The goal of our trial was to 1) provide corn to lactating Jersey dairy cows for summer feed, 2) compare the nutritional value of Baldrige Grazing Maize and the farmer's own corn, and 3) evaluate the crop enterprise record for the crop.

Our experiences growing the corn were as follows:

1. Uneven emergence due to poor planting placement into shale soil decreased our population significantly. It is recommended to plant grazing corn at a population of 40,000 plants per acre. We would recommend that corn

be planted using a corn planter in 30 inches and then doubling back between the row to create 15-inch rows. (This planting technique was used by Mohn in 1996 with success). A regular grain drill is not recommended.

2. Low population and cool temperatures that delayed plant growth and development, allowed annual weeds to emerge, thus necessitating a post-emerge weed control. This was an added cost, but something unexpected happened! Due to the lack of competition, annual crabgrass germinated and grew with the corn.

3. Initially, it took three days before the cows started grazing the corn.

4. The cows selected both corn and crabgrass. After milking, the cows would feed in the newly opened section of corn. They selected three to five mouthfuls of crabgrass and then one to three bites of corn. After two hours, the cows would feed on corn plants that were grazed previously.

5. The Jersey cows kept a tank production level of 45 pounds of milk on the corn and crabgrass, supplemented with 15 pounds of high moisture and/or dry ear corn, and minerals and vitamins. Grazing period was from July 28 to August 23.

6. Cows were reluctant to return to the new vegetation when the water source was over 500 feet. Instead, they returned to corn and crabgrass that was previously grazed. Thus, it is recommended that the water source be closer than 500 feet.

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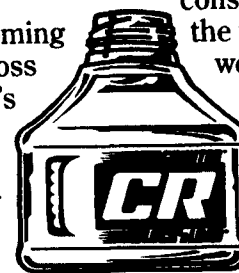
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