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As we stare out over the landscape, we can see a tint of green appearing among the brown. Yes, this means spring is around the corner and the grazing season is right behind it.

If we put the grazing system to rest in the fall properly, it should take minimum time to put it back in service in the spring. There are several things that you should plan to inspect and service in the spring.

We need to check our fences for needed repairs and maintenance requirements. Check for downed wires, broken posts, missing clips, broken insulators, broken gate hooks, etc. Check the charger and its grounding system and lightning arrestors. This is the real heart of the system and if it is going to keep your livestock where you put them it must be working properly and correctly connected to the fencing system.

Depending on how well we drained our water system there may be few, if any, problems with our water system. Once the danger of freezing is over in your area, you need to pressurize your system and check for leaks. Check all the lines, fittings, valves, and troughs to see if any damage has occurred and make the necessary repairs and replacements.

Determine your fertilizer program for the year and plan that initial application. If you have adequately balanced your grass with a legume at about a 70:30 mix, you need not think about nitrogen (N) applications. The legumes will provide most of the N needed by the grasses, and you need only be concerned about phosphorous (P) and potassium (K) levels. A soil test should be the basis for your making a decision concerning any application of these nutrients well as lime.

Laneways are also items that needs to be checked. Did any washing take place over the winter months? If so filling in those gullies is in order but this is only the band-aid. We need to stop any future erosion from taking place by keeping surface water from running in the laneways. Water diverters can be installed to turn the surface water back out onto the grassed areas.

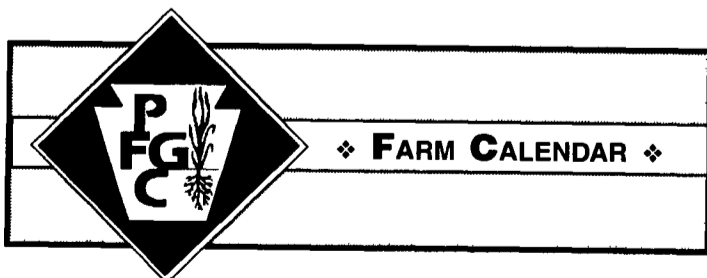
If you need to apply a surface coat, now is a good time to do that. If large stone or coarse material is visible on the surface, you need to cover them with a fine material to prevent hoof problems.

Check stream crossings to make sure everything is in order and no winter damage has taken place. If you do not have stream crossings, now may be a good time to consider them in your system. Keeping your livestock out of the streams and limiting their access is important. In conjunction with crossings is the consideration of streambank fencing. Many programs offer you technical and financial assistance with these practices.

If you need to make some new seeding, time is a wasting. You should have already decided on what you are going to seed. In the event you have not, make a determination of the site conditions regarding soil drainage, fertility levels, etc. and select a specie or mix of grass and legume that is compatible with the site conditions. Then make the seeding at the proper time for your area and allow it to adequately establish before you graze it. This should not be before the later summer or early fall and then only a light grazing so the new seedlings have a good enough root system to withstand a grazing.

One of the other things we need to plan for is to get the dates of pasture walks and field days on your calendar. These functions are important ways in which you can learn more about grazing and it is also an important way in which you can share your knowledge and experiences with others to help them learn more. If you don't have a local graziers group that is holding such events and you would like to learn about setting up such a group, give me a call or send me a note and I will get you that information.

Another way to find out more information on these subjects and many other aspects of grazing is to attend the upcoming Pennsylvania Grazing and Forage Conference, March 4-5 at the Holiday Inn in Grantville. I will be happy to send you additional information on this conference or refer to several other articles in this *Foraging Around* section.



(Continued from Page 1)

Center, Mercer, 1 p.m.-4 p.m.
Wednesday, March 25

Grazing In The Northeast, Radisson-Penn Harris, Camp Hill, thru March 26.

Tuesday, March 31

N.W. Grazing Conference, Days Inn, Clarion, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, April 14

Management Intensive Grazing 4-Day Course, Holiday Inn, Clarion, 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m., thru April 15.

Tuesday, April 28

Management Intensive Grazing 4-Day Course, Holiday Inn, Clarion, 8:30 a.m.-9 p.m., thru April 29.



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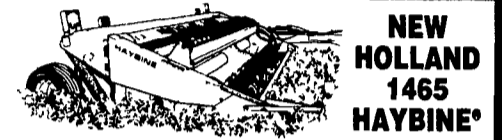
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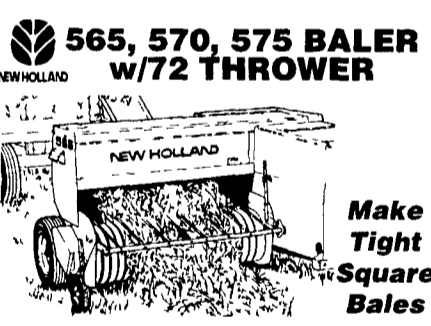
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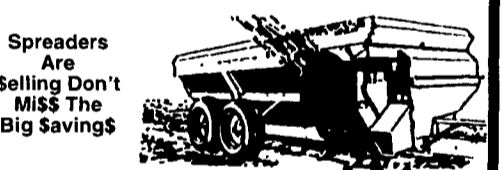
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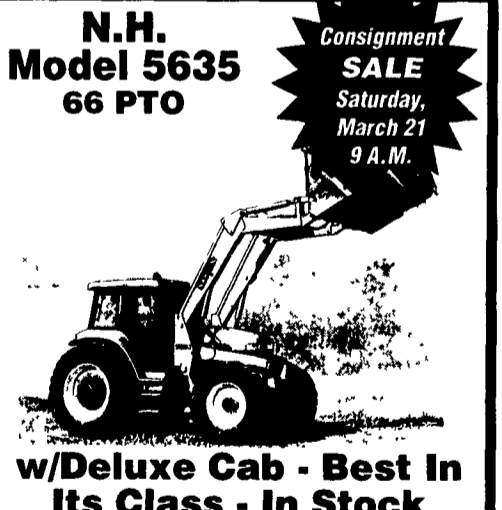
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