

Pasture Growth Rates Recorded In Penn State Study

Editor's Note: Craig Williams, Tioga County extension agent is coordinating a statewide pasture growth study related to rotational grazing. Here's another update of the study.

PA Pasture Growth Charts

This week we are going to look at the pasture growth in two different terms. One is Pasture Growth per day and the other is Average Cover. These charts will be from the study across PA. Several Penn State County agents are measuring pasture growth on farms in their county and watching how the growth is different across the state.

Pasture Growth/day is the paddocks that increased in growth and then the increase is divided by the days between samples. For example, if the average of the paddocks increases 700 lbs this week and there were 7 days between sampling, then the average growth would be 100 lbs per day. No data on this chart means that all the measured paddocks for that week decreased in lbs of pasture.

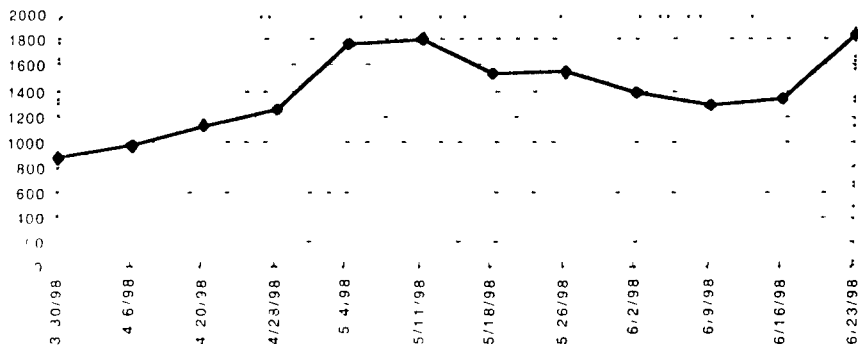
Ave Pasture Cover is the average amount of grass that is on the all paddocks measured on the farm. As you can see the Average Cover tends to increase thru the spring as the grass grows faster than the herd can consume. When this is happening a faster rotation can be used or take paddocks out for hay/haylage.

I will have comments about each County Chart and what has affected the graph.

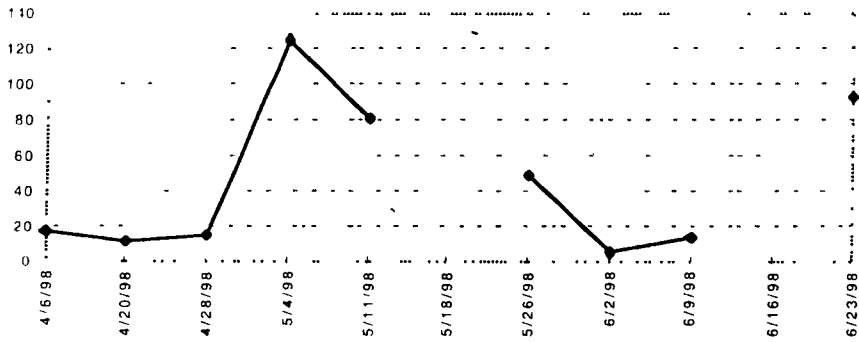
Columbia County

Longer rotations on this farm and paddocks were clipped in Late May, see the decrease in growth the week after.

Columbia Ave Pasture Cover



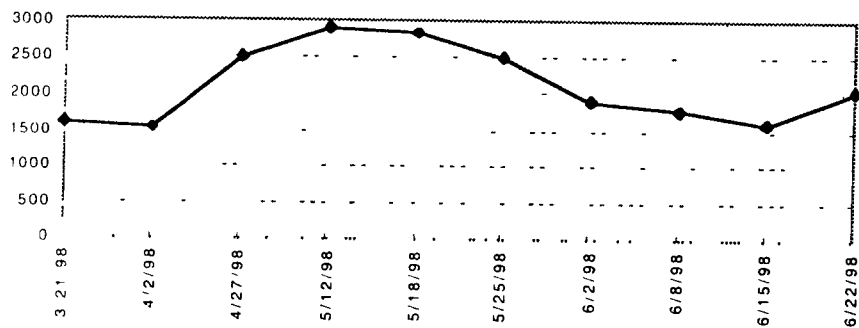
Columbia Ave Growth/day



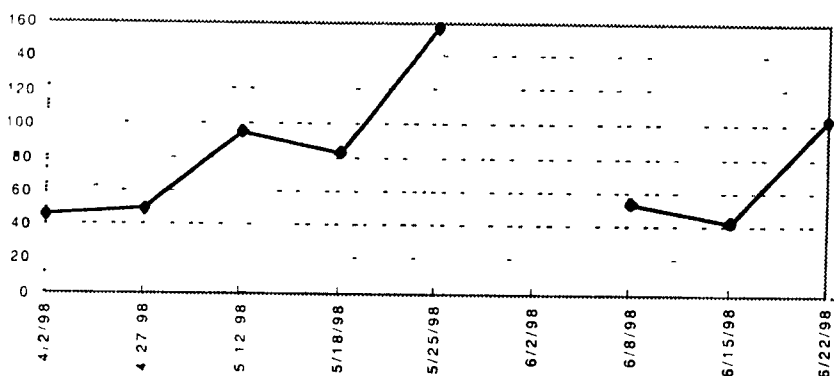
Lancaster County

The paddocks were clipped in early June and this decreases the charts. The growth on May 25th is off of one paddock and this average is a little high.

Lancaster Pasture Cover



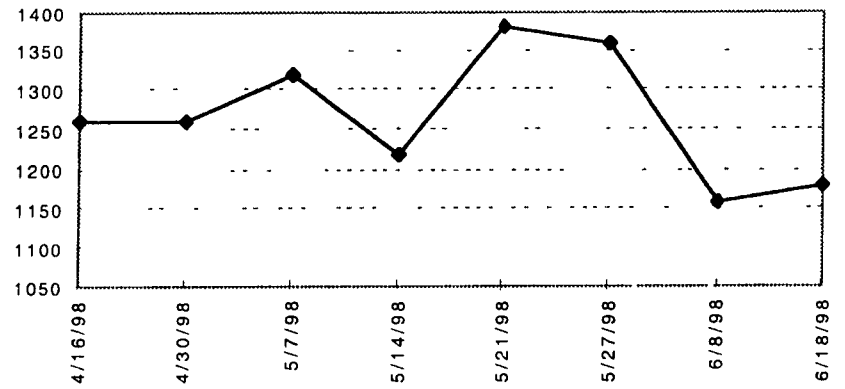
Lancaster Ave Growth/Day



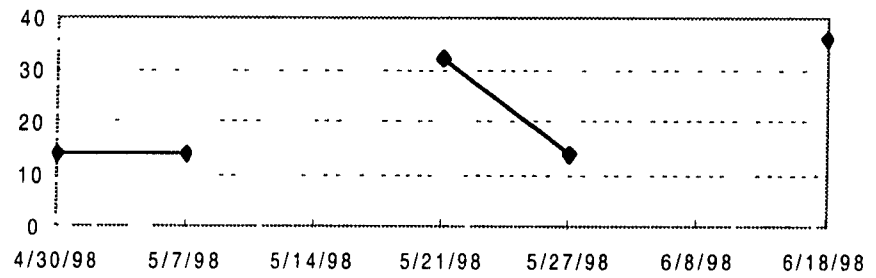
Bradford County

The paddocks were mowed in Early June and see how the charts are affected. The spots in the growth/day chart with no data is when all paddocks were grazed or clipped that week.

Bradford Pasture Cover

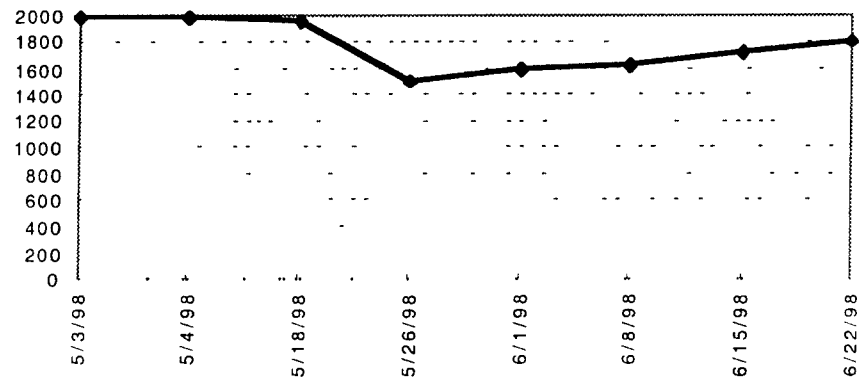


Bradford Growth/day

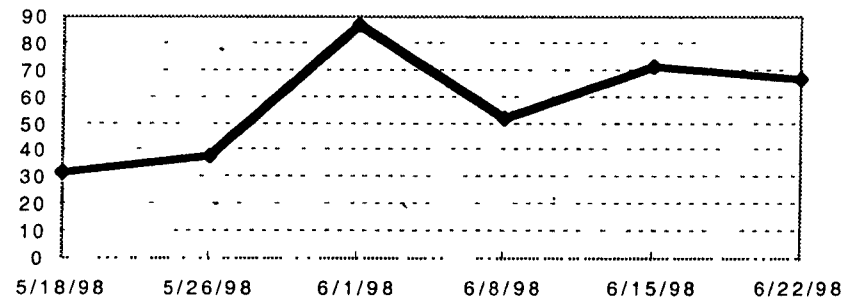


Dauphin County

Dauphin Ave Pasture Cover



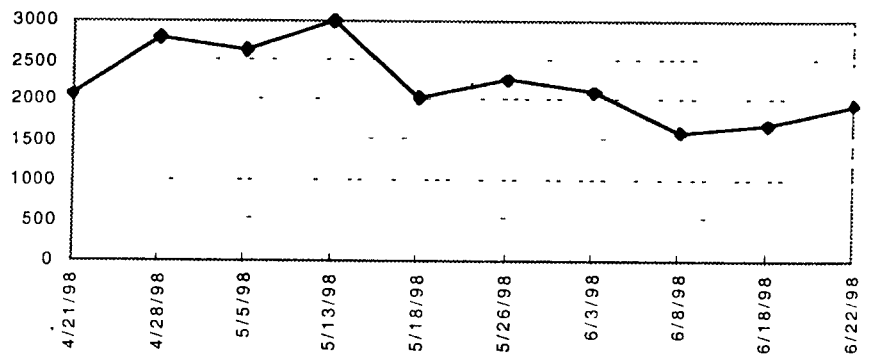
Dauphin Growth/day



Berks County

Notice the Dry weather effect on the Ave Cover.

Berks Ave Pasture Cover



The Berks County Growth/day shows how the dry weather is slowing the growth. Most of May the grass was growing 70-100 lbs a day. This paddock would gain 700 lbs in a week. If your herd needed to eat 1000 lbs per day, this paddock would be ready in two weeks. This farm was on two week rotations for some of this time.

Berks Pasture Growth/Day

