

# What Do These Graziers Do When The 'Summer Slump' Arrives?

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the grass was knee-high and took it right down the ground," he said.

Mast noted that he had never tried sudangrass before. "I like to try a little bit before putting the cows on it," he indicated.

They had eight feedings off of it every 10 days. He never clipped it.

This year, the Masts started grazing spelt.

In November, no-tilled rye was planted into the sudangrass field. This will be used for spring feeding.

Mast told the graziers at the conference to get the animals out there "as early as possible to graze." He has begun testing some grazing corn fields to see what kind of reception they will have on the farm.

Tom Williams of Middletown manages 130 milking cows and 45 dry and pregnant heifers on his Jersey farm. In addition, he cares for 80 heifers and 20 calves. The farm name, Bryncoed, is based on a Welsh word meaning "hill and trees."

When Williams realized he would have to speak at the conference on the topic of "summer slump," he had a question: was it the slump of the "animal, grass, or the farmer?"

Williams manages 75-140 acres of pasture bluegrass, orchardgrass, bromegrass, barcel fescue, red canary, alfalfa, clovers, and rye. He also maintains 130 acres in corn, 70 in silage, and 60 acres of high moisture ear corn.

Bryncoed also features 100 acres of alfalfa grass silage, hay, and pasture, and 35 acres in rye silage, early straw, grain, and green manure.

Williams begins grazing between April 10-25 and stops from Nov. 1-Dec. 23. Milk cows have 30 to 50 lots, 60 acres plus hay and corn. Dry cow and pregnant heifers have 11-17 lots at 1-1.5 acres per lot.

For the summer, the milking herd is fed TMR once a day after afternoon milking a sufficient amount to have some left for morning consumption after morning milking before going to



Grazing conference speakers, from left, Forrest Stricker, Berks County grazier; Titus Martin of TI-Lin Holsteins, Fayetteville; and Jerry M. Swisher, Jr., extension agent in dairy science from Virginia Tech.

pasture. In the winter, TMR is fed twice a day.

In the summer, dry cows are fed silage once a day in the evening — the amount is determined by the pasture quantity.

Winter feed is 2.5 pounds per day of coarse hay with silage in the evening. Grain is fed at one pound per head per day in the morning.

Water is available in most milk cow lots from a ¾-inch low-cost black plastic line. Tanks contain floats and hold between 100-150 gallons.

Fence posts are made out of fiberglass. The wire is single-strand outside metal wire. Divider is a nine-strand

polywire.

Williams attempts to handle summer slump by varying the pasture or mixed silage while keeping the grain constant. The cows move over the lots quicker, assuming forage matures sooner during hot or dry weather.

Lawrason Sayre, of Waffle Hill Farm in Churchville, Md., cares for a registered Angus herd. They began putting predominantly corn fields into pasture about a decade ago, converting the last of the fields in 1989.

The fields contain an orchardgrass/clover/alfalfa mix or a Ky. 31/clover/alfalfa mix. All are seeded no-tilled.

The three most important things in

using a grazing system are "flexibility, flexibility, flexibility," Sayre said.

Today, Waffle Hill Farm includes 112 acres of grass/legume hay/grazing land, with another 28 acres of rented ground for haymaking. One-hundred and ten acres are in permanent pasture.

Waffle Hill is home to 140 registered Angus cows and heifers and 120 are calved out from December to February. Calves are carried through to yearlings. They use two Angus bulls and AI.

This past drought year was especially challenging to Sayre.

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