GRAZING GUIDE

This guide gives an idea about the target heights to start and stop grazing many plants. The guide will be useful to managers and planners who develop and implement grazing plans for any type of animal grazing these plants.

The target “stop grazing” height will ensure enough leaf area and/or reserve energy to provide good regrowth during the subsequent rest period; this is especially important to those plants that store reserve energy above the ground in the lower stem base. This guide also provides an estimate of the number of days of “rest” needed to regrow to the target “start” grazing height during certain seasons.

The expected recovery period (rest) should be helpful in estimating the grazing cycles of particular species. However, many environmental and management factors will impact the estimates of days required to regrow to the desired “start” height.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Species</th>
<th>Growth Periods</th>
<th>Target Grazing Height to start</th>
<th>Target Grazing Height to stop</th>
<th>Expected Days of Rest Before Regrazing</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfalfa</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>8” to bud</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>14-30</td>
<td>Do not start grazing the same area at 8” twice in the same season.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Sep</td>
<td>12” to bloom</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>Should usually have 45 days rest immediately prior to killing frosts; thereafter, the growth should be grazed before leaves drop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov-Dec</td>
<td>Frosted</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>90-120</td>
<td>Spring Frosted growth can be used flexibly, but may need supplemental protein and should be used before leaves deteriorate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bahiagrass, Dallisgrass &amp; associated summer species of Crabgrass, etc.</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>3-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>Frosted growth can be used flexibly, but may need supplemental protein and should be used before leaves deteriorate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>10-21</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug-Sep</td>
<td>4-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>20-40</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oct-Nov</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bermudagrass: Common, hybrid &amp; seeded varieties</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>Frosted growth can be used flexibly, but may need supplemental protein and should be used before leaves deteriorate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>10-21</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Frosted</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Species</td>
<td>Growth Periods</td>
<td>Target Grazing Height</td>
<td>Expected Days of Rest Before Regrazing</td>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bermudagrass: Overseeded with Annual Ryegrass</td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>6-8 3-4</td>
<td>21-30</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>6-8 2-3</td>
<td>14-21</td>
<td>Control the height of ryegrass so it does not shade emerging bermudagrass.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>3-5 1-2</td>
<td>10-21</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aug-Sep</td>
<td>3-5 1-2</td>
<td>21-30</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>2-4 1-2</td>
<td>45-60</td>
<td>Graze Bermuda close during late Sep and Oct to prevent shading of overseeded or volunteering ryegrass during their establishment phase. Do not allow animals to graze ryegrass until it reaches target height.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov-Jan</td>
<td>6-8 3-4</td>
<td>45-90</td>
<td>Target heights directed toward ryegrass during Nov through Apr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bermudagrass: Overseeded with Crimson Clover or Vetch</td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>6-8 3-4</td>
<td>21-45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>6-8 3-4</td>
<td>14-21</td>
<td>Control the height of legumes so they do not shade the emerging Bermuda.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Aug</td>
<td>3-5 1-2</td>
<td>10-21</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sept-Oct</td>
<td>2-4 1-2</td>
<td>21-45</td>
<td>Graze Bermuda close during late Sep and Oct to prevent shading of overseeded or volunteering legumes during their establishment phase. Do not allow animals to graze winter crops until they reach target height.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov-Jan</td>
<td>4-8 3-4</td>
<td>45-90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bermudagrass: Mixed with Ladino and/or Red Clover</td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>4-6 2-3</td>
<td>21-45</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>4-6 2-3</td>
<td>14-21</td>
<td>Control the height of clovers so they do not shade the emerging Bermuda.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>4-6 2-3</td>
<td>10-21</td>
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<td>Aug-Sep</td>
<td>4-6 2-3</td>
<td>20-40</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oct-Nov</td>
<td>4-6 2-3</td>
<td>30-60</td>
<td>Graze Bermuda close during late Sep and Oct to prevent shading of overseeded or volunteering clovers. Do not allow animals to graze clovers until they reach target height during winter.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec-Jan</td>
<td>4-6 3-4</td>
<td>45-90</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Species</td>
<td>Growth Periods</td>
<td>Target Grazing Height inches</td>
<td>Expected Days of Rest Before Regrazing</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to start</td>
<td>to stop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bermuda grass: overseeded with prairiegrass</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>Control the height of prairiegrass so it does not shade the emerging Bermuda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May-Jun</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>14-30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jul-Aug</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>10-21</td>
<td>Manage Prairiegrass to produce mature seeds in Jul-Aug to provide for volunteer establishment during Sep and Oct. Control Bermuda growth in Sep and Oct by close grazing, but not so close that prairiegrass seedlings are eaten.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>45-90</td>
<td>Graze Bermuda close during late Sep and Oct to prevent shading of over seeded or volunteering prairiegrass during the establishment phase. Do not allow animals to graze prairiegrass until it reaches target height.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov-Feb</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>45-90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bermudagrass: overseeded with Smallgrain</td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>Target heights directed toward smallgrain during Nov through Apr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>14-21</td>
<td>Control the height of smallgrains so they do not shade the emerging Bermuda.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>10-21</td>
<td>Graze Bermuda close during late Sep and Oct to prevent shading of over seeded smallgrain during the establishment phase. Do not allow animals to graze smallgrain until it reaches target height.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug-Sep</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>21-30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>45-90</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nov-Jan</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>45-90</td>
<td>Target heights directed toward smallgrain during Nov through Apr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bluegrass, Kentucky with White Clover</td>
<td>Mar-May</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>14-30</td>
<td>If clover is White Dutch, then possible to graze to 1½ inches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Aug</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>30-45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>21-45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Nov-Feb</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian Bluestem</td>
<td>May-Jul</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>14-30</td>
<td>The late summer growth may be grazed in fall, but quality may be limiting and utilization will be improved with very high stock density grazing paddock in a short time period (&lt;3 days).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug-Sep</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct-Dec</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Crabgrass and associated warm season species</td>
<td>May-Jun</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>14-30</td>
<td>The late summer growth may be grazed in fall, but quality may be limiting and utilization will be improved with very high stock density grazing paddock in a short time period (&lt;3 days). Use frosted growth before leaves deteriorate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-Aug</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>14-30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>Replant in Spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Species</td>
<td>Growth Periods</td>
<td>Target Grazing Height to start</td>
<td>Target Grazing Height to stop</td>
<td>Days of Rest Before Regrazing</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crimson Clover and mixtures with Ryegrass or Smallgrain</td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>45-60</td>
<td>Control the height of the smallgrain or ryegrass so they are not shading the clover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov-Jan</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>30-90</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>21-45</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr-Jun</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>14-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop Residue: (Corn or Sorghum or Cotton Stalks)</td>
<td>Sep-Dec</td>
<td>Immediately following harvest</td>
<td>Leave some residue for soil protection if cover crop is not planted</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>It is best to use residue as soon as possible following crop harvest to minimize deterioration of fodder. It is important to leave residue for cover or plant cover crop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fescue or Orchardgrass with or without Ladino Clover</td>
<td>Mar-Apr</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May-Jun</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>14-30</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jul-Aug</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>30-60</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>21-35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov-Feb</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>45-90</td>
<td>Stockpile will be taller; stripgraze.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fescue (&lt;70%) mixed with Bermuda or Crabgrass</td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td>Grazing height during the summer is dictated by the species to be favored. Shorter “stop grazing heights” (1-2 inches) will favor Bermuda and Crabgrass and taller (&gt;3”) will favor the Fescue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr-Jun</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>14-30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-Aug</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>21-45</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>21-35</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov-Jan</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>45-90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gamagrass, Eastern</td>
<td>Apr-Jun</td>
<td>14-24</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>During the establishment year, allow plants to reach seed head stage prior to grazing or harvesting, leaving minimum of 10-12” stubble for winter cover.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-Sep</td>
<td>14-24</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>21-45</td>
<td>The late summer growth may be grazed in fall, but utilization will be improved with very high stock density grazing a paddock in a short time period (&lt;3 days). Allow 10-12” growth prior to frost.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct-Nov</td>
<td>12-46</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kudzu</td>
<td>May-Sep</td>
<td>Full leaf out and stems elongating</td>
<td>For regrowth leave &gt;50% leaf coverage</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td>To eradicate, keep canopy completely defoliated, especially in late summer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Species</td>
<td>Growth Periods</td>
<td>Target Grazing Height to start</td>
<td>Target Grazing Height to stop</td>
<td>Expected Days of Rest Before Regrazing</td>
<td>Comments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lespedeza, Annual (Kobe and Korean)</td>
<td>May-Jun</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td>Use all frosted growth before leaves drop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-Sep</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>21-45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frosted</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millet: Foxtail, German, Browntop</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td>The late summer growth may be grazed in fall, but utilization will be improved with very high stock density grazing a paddock in a short time period (&lt;3 days).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Aug</td>
<td>Boot to Heading</td>
<td>2+</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millet: Pearl, Hybrid or Dwarf</td>
<td>May-Jul</td>
<td>14-20</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>14-30</td>
<td>The late summer growth may be grazed in fall, but utilization will be improved with very high stock density grazing a paddock in a short time period (&lt;3 days).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug-Oct</td>
<td>14-20</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Millet (Pearl or Hybrid): Double cropped with</td>
<td>Oct-Nov</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td>Annual Ryegrass and small grain growth will decline sharply in May and the Millet will be planted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Ryegrass or Smallgrain</td>
<td>Dec-Jan</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>45-90</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Millet planted in May/June</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>14-20</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>14-21</td>
<td>Millet planted in late May or early June into ryegrass/small grain stubble or following cultivation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug-Sep</td>
<td>14-20</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>Millet used by end of September (grazed or clipped to 2-3” stubble) so that ryegrass or small grain can be planted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prairiegrass: (Rescue grass, “Matua”)</td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td>Allow one seed crop to mature for volunteer seeding in fall.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr-Jun</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>14-30</td>
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<td>6-8</td>
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<td>21-35</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>21-35</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov-Jan</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>30-60</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Clover and mixtures with cool-season grasses</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>6” to bud</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>14-21</td>
<td>Should usually have 45 days rest immediately prior to killing frosts; thereafter, the growth may be grazed before leaves drop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Sep</td>
<td>10” to bud</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov-Dec</td>
<td>Frosted</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ryegrass, Annual</td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov-Jan</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>45-60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>21-35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr-Jun</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>14-21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Species</td>
<td>Growth Periods</td>
<td>Target Grazing Height to start</td>
<td>Target Grazing Height to stop</td>
<td>Expected Days of Rest Before Regrazing</td>
<td>Comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smallgrain (Barley, Oat, Rye, Triticale, Wheat)</td>
<td>Oct-Dec</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>30-90</td>
<td>Potential prussic acid poisoning for 3 days after the first killing frost or when grazing prior to 18” height.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>30-60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar-May</td>
<td>6-12</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>14-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun</td>
<td>3+</td>
<td>1-2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Replant in fall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudangrass, Sorghum-Sudan: Double cropped with Annual Ryegrass or Smallgrain</td>
<td>Oct-Nov</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30-45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec-Jan</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>45-60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feb-Mar</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>Summer annual planted</td>
<td>Annual Ryegrass and smallgrain growth will decline sharply in May and the summer grass will be planted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>14-21</td>
<td>Summer annuals planted in late May or early Jun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug-Sep</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td>Summer annual used by end of Sep (grazed or clipped to 2-3 inch stubble) so that a winter grass can be planted into stubble or into prepared seedbed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudangrass, Sorghum-Sudangrass, Johnsongrass</td>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun-Jul</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>14-21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aug-Sep</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct-Nov</td>
<td>6+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>The late summer growth may be grazed in fall, but utilization will be improved with very high stock density grazing a paddock in a short time period (&lt;3 days). Potential prussic acid poisoning for 3 days after the first killing frost or when grazing prior to 18” height.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switchgrass, Indiangrass, Big Bluestem</td>
<td>Apr-Jun</td>
<td>14-18</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jul-Aug</td>
<td>18-22</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>21-40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sep-Oct</td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>8-12</td>
<td>Spring</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Forage Fact Sept 2005. Revised July 2012
Prepared by:
James T. Green, Jr., Douglas S. Chamblee
Crop Science Dept.

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