

News Release for Immediate Use or Next Issue
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River Valley Extension District
04/03/2019

Long, “Rough” Winter—Proactively Addressing Field & Pasture Concerns

After a “rough” winter many producers are dealing with the “rough” aftermath. Trampled pastures, fields, waterways, erosion issues, etc. are plaguing many of our producers in the River Valley Extension District and across Kansas as well. These unfavorable conditions will need to be addressed in the upcoming months. Although many of the pastures were left in a state of upheaval, there are ways to foster growth and development of our grasslands.

There are several practices to take into consideration when thinking about the next steps for your property. One practice, more common than not, is to just let the pasture/waterway recover on its own. Many of our grasses are resilient enough to endure the compaction and stress induced by livestock. In most years, this process works satisfactorily, but this winter has been exceptional, and many of our forages are not resilient enough to withstand such abuse. However, the imminent threat of weeds such as ragweed, pigweed, goosegrass, and barnyard grass become a concern by doing nothing at all.

A more viable option is the planting of spring forages into the adversely affected areas, but it is important to remember our primary goal, by doing so, is to mitigate weed pressure. An example of spring planted forages, that work very well together, is the interseeding of red clover and oats into the troublesome areas. Though many producers already use oats when planting alfalfa as a companion crop to aid and protect alfalfa in the earlier growth stages. The same is true with the interseeding of red clover and oats into the problem areas in our pastures and other grasslands. The oats aid in the establishment and development of the red clover stand.

There are a few options for producers to take into consideration to aid in the recovery of our waterways, pastures, etc. However, the best option to choose depends widely on one’s management style, forage production goals, and the timing. Regardless of the option utilized, success in the recovery of trampled forage production areas relies heavily on the unpredictable cooperation of Mother Nature.

We, at the K-State Research and Extension Office, are willing to help you plan your next steps, based your given situation. Please contact Extension Agents Tyler Husa or Brett Melton, by calling (785) 243-8185 or by emailing thusa@k-state.edu or bmelton@k-state.edu respectively.