



Managing Late Season Grassy Weeds

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Managing late-season grassy weeds in forage crops is a perennial challenge for forage and cattle producers. Grasses like knotroot foxtail, vaseygrass, dallisgrass, smutgrass, and broomsedge can become particularly problematic as summer wanes. These weeds often stand out in pastures as the more desirable grasses get grazed down by cattle and other livestock, leaving behind unsightly and unproductive clumps. Addressing this issue requires a multifaceted approach, combining mechanical, cultural, and chemical control methods.

Mechanical Control: Mowing

One of the most straightforward methods to manage these grassy weeds in late summer is mowing. Mowing or bush-hogging can quickly and effectively remove the taller, perennial weeds from pastures. This approach helps minimize seed production by cutting down the plants before they can mature and set seed. However, mowing does not address the root of the problem—literally. The underground root biomass of these clump-forming perennials remains intact, allowing the weeds to regrow. Therefore, while mowing offers a temporary solution, it does not provide a long-term fix.

Cultural Control Methods

Cultural practices play a crucial role in managing grassy weeds. One effective cultural method is rotational grazing, which ensures that livestock graze more uniformly across the

pasture, reducing the chances of weed encroachment. Proper soil fertility management through timely fertilizer applications can also give desirable forage species a competitive edge over weeds. Fertilizing in the spring, when rainfall is typically more abundant, helps ensure that nutrients are adequately incorporated into the soil.

Interestingly, while livestock are excellent grazers, they have their preferences and will often avoid certain weed species once they mature. For example, cattle may graze on young smutgrass, vaseygrass, and broomsedge during spring green-up but will typically avoid these grasses as they mature. To counteract this, maintaining a diverse and well-fertilized pasture can help keep these weeds in check.

Chemical Control Methods

Chemical control methods can also be effective, but they require careful consideration to avoid damaging desirable forage species. There are a few scenarios where herbicides can selectively target weeds with minimal impact on forages: Outrider (sulfosulfuron) for johnsongrass in bermudagrass: Outrider is effective in controlling johnsongrass when applied to grass under 24 inches tall. While there have been some reports of resistance, this treatment works more than 90% of the time when applied correctly.

Velpar or Hexazinone for smutgrass in bahiagrass: These herbicides can control smutgrass when used at high rates, in multiple applications, and with timely rainfall. Pairing these treatments with good cultural practices can enhance their effectiveness.

Wick bar or roller, weed wiper for tall statured perennial grasses: This method involves using a wiper applicator to physically “wipe” herbicide onto the upper portions of taller weeds, avoiding contact with the shorter desirable grasses. For maximum efficacy, a non-selective herbicide like Roundup (glyphosate) is usually recommended. Glyphosate works systemically within the plant, meaning even partial contact can affect a larger portion of the plant. However, higher concentrations of herbicide may be needed since only a small part of the plant is treated.

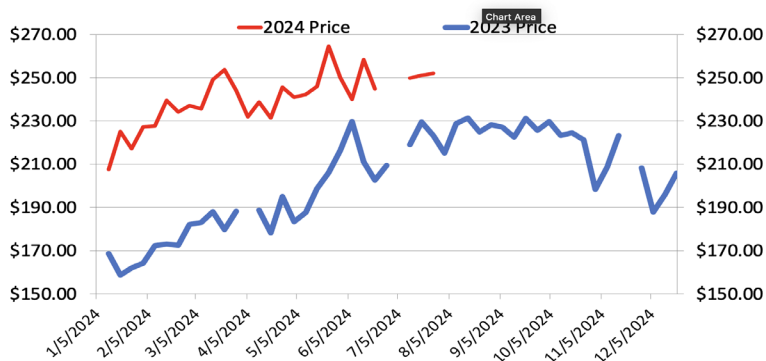
Wiper applications are particularly suitable for late summer when selective broadcast treatments are ineffective, and fields are often drought-stressed. As previously mentioned, there are few, if any, selective broadcast treatments that will work without causing severe damage to our forages. For certain herbicides to work effectively, it’s imperative to have good growing conditions so that the herbicide can effectively move through the plants vascular system. Tall weedy grasses however, with their extensive root systems, can buffer drought stress, making them resilient even during dry periods. As long as the herbicide is applied before the weeds reach reproductive maturity, wiper applications can yield positive results.

Sometimes a two-directional treatment is better than one. Patience is essential when using wiper rigs, as the process can be slow and tedious, somewhat more of an art than a science. Although these methods require careful attention to detail, producers can effectively tackle these persistent weeds, improving forage quality and yield in the long run. As always, remember to follow pesticide label recommendations to ensure safe and effective applications.

Alabama Cattle Market Price Watch

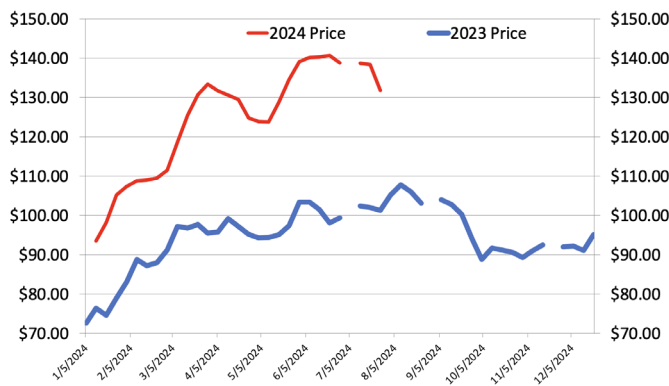
Weekly Feeder Cattle Market Prices, 700 -750 Lbs.

Steers, Medium and Large #1, Alabama



Boner (80-85%) Cull Cow Weekly Market Prices

Average Dressing, Alabama



Alabama Cull Cow Summary, July 2024

Average Dressing
Weighted average Weight & Price

		Head	Average Weight	Average Price
Breakers* <small>(Highest cull cow cutout/retail value)</small>	75-80%	219	1,420	\$138.6
Boners* <small>(Average cull cow cutout/retail value)</small>	80-85%	674	1,204	\$136.68
Lean* <small>(Lowest cull cow cutout/retail value)</small>	85-90%	404	1,053	\$121.73

*The higher percentage lean, the less value in retail cutout.

Source: <https://mymarketnews.ams.usda.gov/viewReport/2006>