



Options for Late Summer and Fall Emergency Forage Crops by Rick Tamm & Larry Hawkins

With the unpredictability of the weather and other factors, this year seems to be bringing many questions about emergency forages. As I write this article, we, in the Upper Midwest, are seeing both long drought periods and not far away with a 10 inches of rain in a day and flooding. Couple this with a mild winter, which has allowed a preponderance of insects, grubs, worms and slugs to nibble on our corn. This is not to mention an 80° March and a cold April which gave false alarms to hay growth and seeding timing. When will have an normal, average weather pattern again?!?

So what are we to do? At least for the feed shortage part, We have some answers. There crops that can qualify for emergency forages which can solve our need for high quality replacement feed. Solutions come from forages which favorably answer the following questions:

1. Will the crop establish quickly?
2. Will the crop produce harvestable forage in 45 to 60 days?
3. Will the crop grow in the weather conditions predictable (?) for the area?
4. Will the crop fit into your operation's feeding and harvesting system? Grazing only? Mechanical harvesting only? Kemper head only, etc.?
5. Does the crop unfavorably limit options for the next seeding?
6. Does the crop produce high quality forage?

This article cannot answer all of these questions for you on your farm and in your area, however your local Byron Seed dealer (check out our Dealer Locator Tab) can help. What will be covered are many options that may be appropriate for your farm and your locality. Some will be well known and other options may be more adventurous! The list is ordered roughly in the order that they can be sown or planted. Some options are actually triple crops that can be accomplished in the Upper Midwest! The end of the list will have options that fall-planted, and bring about the earliest forage in the spring

1. Plant AS9301 or AS6402, etc. into any field that either comes open early (wheat, or other small grain) or has had a disappointing harvest this summer (poor hay stand, drought-stressed or poor corn emergence).
2. Do the above and add 5#'s of common red clover to add to the protein of the main crop and then provide a cover crop for the winter and either a green manure or harvestable legume for the spring.
3. Plant AF7101, 7201 or 7303 (depending on potential hot weather remaining. Although usually harvested at soft dough stage like corn silage. Taking the crop before maximum yield either forced by frost or just mowing and wide swathing, allowing it to dry to less than 70% moisture is also possible. Using the above mentioned forage sorghums (Concep® treated) allows for the option of herbicide control which isn't available with option 1.
4. Plant Master Graze (MG). MG can finish 45 to 60 days without the need for as much hot weather as any of the sorghum products. Its expected tonnage (4 to 5 tons of DM) is also very high for the its relative maturity.



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5. Sow Forage Plus® Oats, Everleaf Oats or Trical® 2700 forage triticale in August to get a quick crop of high quality forage. Oats and spring triticale are less likely to head out when fall planted thereby maintaining their high quality longer. Due to this fact: Jerry Oats can be fall-sown and approach the quality of the forage oats.
6. Plant 75#’s of the above oats **and** 75#’s Trical® 336/815 in August to get both a fall harvest and a spring harvest. When harvesting in the fall, be sure to leave a 4” residue to allow for over-wintering of the Trical®. Fertility needs will be greater during the early spring green-up (100+ units N) with only 40-50 units of N for establishment.
7. Another similar option would be to combine spring and fall Triticale as in Option 5 **or** add a winter-hardy annual ryegrass (ARG) to further add to yield. This option is called Triticale Plus. Fertility requirements go up with the addition of the ARG. The ARG could be continually harvested throughout the summer, but more likely you would want to move to another crop due to the expected headiness of the ARG. The ARG **must** then be either Round-Up®-ed or plowed. No short cuts here!
8. Late summer (August) seedings of Trical® 815/336 can provide both a small fall harvest then a large spring harvest after vernalization.
9. Plant an annual ryegrass in August for a fall cutting. You can decide if you also want a spring cutting and plant a more winter-hardy variety. Just know that as you move to the next crop, the ARG must be moldboard plowed or burnt off.
10. An option used in the more Southern parts of the Byron Seed area (Southern Indiana and Illinois, Kentucky Tennessee and Missouri) is the sowing of Timothy (Kootenai) as a winter annual. Take a first cutting of great Timothy hay and move on to the next spring seeding.

These solutions can all provide dairy quality forage in a short time. The key to dairy quality is the timing of harvesting. However, the timing will not get away from us as quickly as it might in the spring. Small grains including triticale are not expected to head out in the fall when planted in August in the Upper Midwest if adequate fertility is provided and enough rain occurs. Maximum yield and quality intersect at the flag leaf stage (pre-boot). For the sorghums, harvest time is at 32” tall for AS6402, 38” for AS9301 and at soft dough stage for the forage sorghums. For the Master Graze, harvest is best at tasseling. If these rules are followed each of these crops will be very high in NDF-d and approach or beat corn silage energy. For the Timothy, you will have some of the best dry cow forage you ever fed. And lastly, for the Annual Ryegrass, at the pre-boot stage, ARG will make some of the sweetest grass that can be found. NDF-d’s of these grasses can approach or beat 70%.

As for yield, the crops that are in the 45 to 60 day harvesting category will all produce between 1½ to two tons of dry matter. If these same crops are harvested for heifer feed, many especially Trical® can double these yields. The longer crops such as forage sorghum (5 to 9 tons DM) and Master Graze (4 to 5 tons DM) are very productive, if you have enough time and sunshine.



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Seeding into grass difficult

Oats, Spring triticale & Plus, Summer Annuals, Fall trit & Plus Green Spirit Oats & fall Triticale Seed clover into coen or sorghum/

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