

Hay/Pasture Fertility

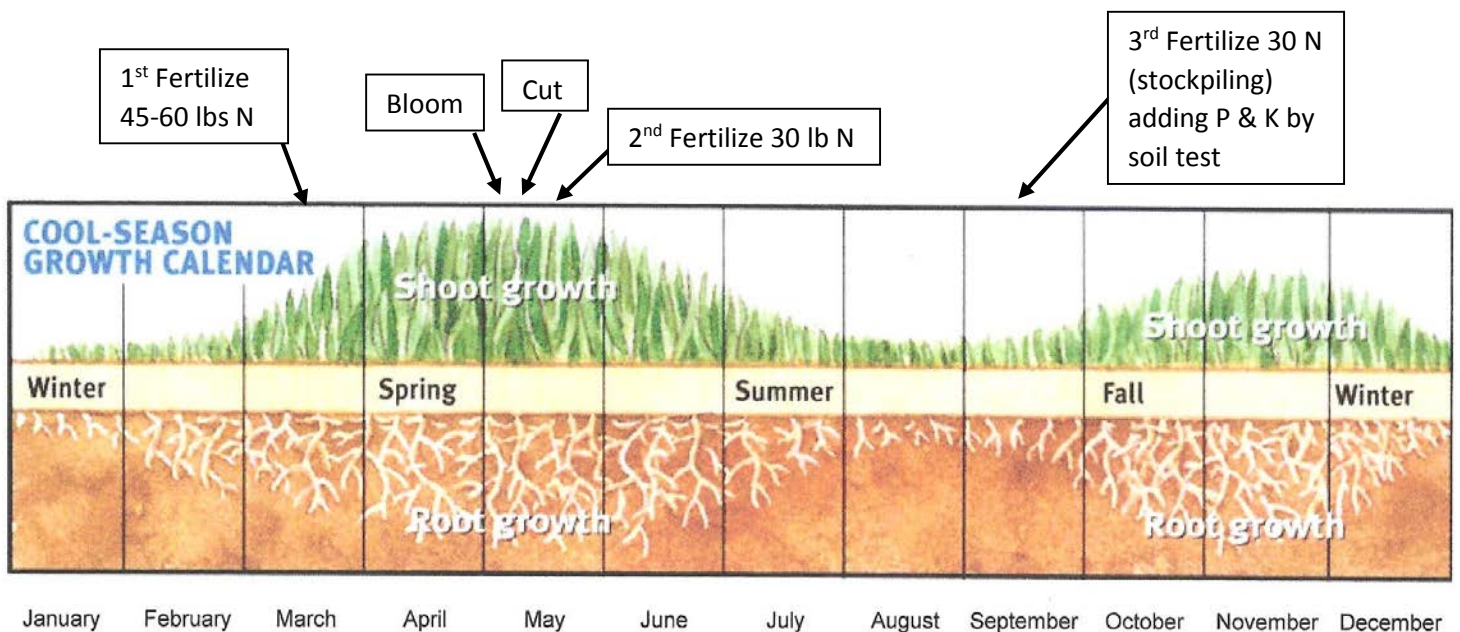
To maintain a productive stand of a high-quality forage, the proper nutrients for plant growth must be provided. If the nutrient status of the soil is allowed to drop, then grass growth will be reduced, and weeds will begin to encroach. Lime, phosphate and potash should be applied according to soil test results. A soil test should be taken every three years. It is a good idea to soil test a third of your fields each year. Following this procedure, soil tests will be taken each year in different fields, building a habit of soil testing. The question will not be "Is this the year I need to soil test?" but will be "Which fields do I need to test this year?"

Table 1; Pounds of nutrients removed from hay harvest per acre:

	Tall Fescue (3.5 ton)	Sorghum X Sudangrass(4 ton)	Bermudagrass (6 ton)
Nitrogen	135	160	258
Phosphate	65	61	60
Potash	185	233	288

Understanding the Growth Curve and Practices Needed:

Cool season grasses will produce 55% of their growth in the first cutting. Therefore, adding 45 - 60 actual pounds of Nitrogen at first green-up will strengthen the crop to grow and be healthy. Cutting early will allow for the second growth to be well within the growth curve to maximize yields of second harvest.



Warm Season grasses grow best in the heat and dry months of the year. These crops include: bermudagrass, native grasses, crabgrass, sorghum x sudangrass, teffgrass, and pearl millet. Native grasses grow well with less fertilizer. Summer annuals (sudan & millet) and Bermuda use much more fertilizer than even the cool season crops. But they will produce more tonnage per acre.

