

## News Column

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### **Fall Oats with Moisture – A Possibility**

Oats may be one of our most under-used fall forages. That's right plain old dull oats. It grows fast with favorable moisture, thrives under cool fall conditions, has good feed value, and has the potential to produce good tonnage of hay or pasture. And it dies out over winter, so it protects soil without causing planting problems next spring.

To plant oats, drill about 2 to 3 bushels of oats per acre in preferable early August for maximum yield potential. A fully prepared seedbed usually is best, but you can plant oats directly into wheat stubble or other crop residues if weeds are killed ahead of planting. Even flying oats onto corn fields severely damaged by weather or to be chopped early for silage can work, although rye tends to work better for flying on seed.

Avoid fields with herbicide carryover, and topdress 40 pounds of nitrogen per acre unless the previous crop was heavily fertilized. With good moisture, oats can be ready to graze about 6 to 8 weeks after emergence. Right now we really need some moisture for oats to work though.

Calves and yearlings can gain over two pounds per day. But be careful to avoid grass tetany on lush oat pasture; ask your veterinarian if you should supplement with magnesium. Also, don't suddenly turn out on oat pasture if livestock have been grazing short or dry pastures. Sudden respiratory problems can occur. It is always best to have cattle already filled up with some type of roughage before turn-out onto lush forages.

For hay, cut soon after plants begin to dry out following a killing freeze, or cut earlier if plants reach a desirable growth stage. Oats can accumulate nitrates, so test hay before feeding.

If you are fortunate enough to have good soil moisture, you might give fall oats a try. Some of your best forage growth may still be ahead of you.

### **2018 Kansas Summer Annual Forage Hay and Silage Variety Trial final report**

In 2018, summer annual forage variety trials were conducted across Kansas near Garden City, Hays, and Scandia. All sites evaluated hay and silage entries. Companies were able to enter varieties into any possible combinations of research sites, so not all sites had all varieties. Across the sites, a total of 77 hay varieties and 87 silage varieties were

evaluated. The full 2018 Kansas Forage Report can be accessed online at <https://www.agronomy.k-state.edu/services/crop-performance-tests/>

### **Study Objectives**

The objectives of the Kansas Summer Annual Forage Variety Trial are to evaluate the performance of released and experimental varieties, determine where these varieties are best adapted, and increase the visibility of summer annual forages in Kansas. Breeders, marketers, and producers use data collected from the trials to make informed variety selections. The Summer Annual Forage Trial is planted at locations across Kansas based on the interest of those entering varieties into the test.

This work was funded in part by the Kansas Agricultural Experiment Station and seed suppliers. Sincere appreciation is expressed to all participating researchers and seed suppliers who have a vested interest in expanding and promoting annual forage production in the U.S.

Inestimable differences in soil type, weather, and environmental conditions play a part in increasing experimental error, therefore one should use more than one location and one year of data to make an informed variety selection decision. Please refer to previous years' forage reports to see how a variety performed across years.

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