

MINNESOTA

Stockpiling smooth brome grass to reduce winter feeding costs

Greg Cuomo, Margot Rudstrom, Paul Peterson, Dennis Johnson, Av Singh, and Craig Sheaffer
University of Minnesota

Initiating stockpiling of smooth brome grass-dominated pastures around July 1 with 50 lb N/ac is a viable option to extend the grazing season and reduce winter feed costs in the North Central region. We recently completed an experiment at Morris, MN, looking at different June, July, and August initiation dates and 0, 50, or 100 lb N/ac rates for stockpiling smooth brome grass. We observed the following:

- October yield of stockpiled smooth brome grass decreased from a high of 1.2 ton/ac when initiated June 1 to a low of 0.3 ton/ac when initiation was delayed until August 15.
- Stockpiled brome grass leaf mass was similar for June 1 through July 1 initiation dates, averaging 0.7 ton/ac.
- Applying 50 lb N/ac at stockpile initiation increased brome grass yields by about 40%. Applying 100 lb N/ac usually did not provide an economic yield response.
- Crude protein increased, and ADF and NDF decreased, as stockpile initiation was delayed from June 1 to Aug. 15. Nutritive value was adequate for dry cows or ewes.
- Smooth brome grass-dominant fields destined for stockpiling can be grazed or cut through June, capitalizing on smooth brome grass' high spring productivity prior to stockpile initiation.