

The AMPAC Impact

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Bookem' Dano!!!

If you haven't already, now is the time to book your seed for spring! It is simple supply and demand. Remember the basics of Econ 101?

As of today, we know what the supply is and we also know what demand was for fall. This has caused the market prices on just about every cool season grass to go up from 2 months ago. I say "just about every cool season grass" because perennial and annual ryegrasses remain steady. However, all fescues, bluegrass, brome, etc... have gone up.

So what is going to happen for spring you ask? As I stated earlier, we know what the supply is and we know

that the first 1/2 of the years demand was very good. So we can predict that if we see average demand in the spring we will run very tight on some products. If we see poor demand in the spring then we will have some products to sell. And if we see good demand in the spring then we will run out of some products before the new crop is harvested.

Of course there are so many variables that go into this equation it is difficult to be sure of anything. Weather is always a factor that helps determine spring consumption. Real-estate markets from Maryland to Southern California are down. As the real-estate market cools down so is the new housing starts, which is causing an over production of sod in some areas. This may reduce the demand for sod quality turf seed. However, solid meat prices and low hay supplies should mean good forage seed movement. So with the many variables that are out of our control the best thing we can do is work together so that everyone succeeds. Open and frequent communication, flexibility, and a lot of hard work, will always payoff.



As I write this article, I think about the excitement and opportunities many people have seen by using Chicory as an alternative forage source for their grazing program. I've had the opportunity to see "Oasis Chicory" growing this summer, even though the weather conditions have been less than desirable in many areas (extremely hot and dry). I had producers tell me that if it wasn't for the fact that they had chicory growing on their farms, there would not be anything to graze in some of their paddocks.

Oasis Chicory is a perennial forage with "Alfalfa Quality" feed values (crude protein 15%-30% and digestibility 75%-90%). It is highly palatable to livestock, and has produced weight gains in excess of 2.75 lb/day. Mississippi State University research has data showing an excess of 600 lb/acre gain over a 56 day grazing period, with an average stocking rate of 3 600 lb steers/acre (these results were comparable to Marshall annual ryegrass).



Oasis Chicory produces excellent forage for production animals.

Optimal chicory production has shown best performance under rotational grazing. Best performance has been noted under conditions where a 20-25 day rest between grazing has been allowed. Graze to a stubble height of 4-6 inches minimum. Maintaining the proper grazing system will help prevent stems from bolting. Chicory responds well to nitrogen fertilization with a recommended 30-35 units of N after grazing desirable. If chicory is planted with legumes (red or white clover

in particular) the nitrogen rates can be reduced in order to prevent the N application from reducing the nitrogen fixation of the legume

Recommended seeding rates are 5-8 pounds per acre when seeded alone, or 5 pounds when seeded with clovers (2 pounds of white, 4 pounds of red). Seed may be drilled or broadcasted, but drilling is preferred in order to provide a more uniform planting. DO NOT plant too deep ($\frac{1}{8}$ - $\frac{1}{4}$ inch should be the maximum depth). Make sure that there is a good seed to soil contact and not planted too deeply. There have been successful no-till establishments. Chicory prefers well to moderately drained soils of medium to high fertility.

Grazing systems have been successful for 3-5 years, while maintaining excellent forage quality. Do not allow newly established chicory stands to be grazed until the chicory is at least 8 inches tall. This will generally occur 60-80 days after seeding, depending on current climatic conditions.

"Oasis Chicory" has proven to be highly productive and vigorous. While there are no "magic bullets" to solve all of the grazing needs, I believe "Oasis Chicory" will provide an additional option to improved forages by providing a drought tolerant forage with a high relative feed value to livestock.