

Views From The Foothills

A Publication of the Culpeper Soil & Water Conservation District
Serving Culpeper, Greene, Madison, Orange & Rappahannock Counties
www.culpeperswcd.org

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M. Johnson

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Welcome!

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Please call 540-825-8591 or email stephanied@culpeperswcd.org to remove yourself from our mailing list.

Increasing Farm Income by Maximizing Forage Uptake through Rotational Grazing

By David Massie, Conservation Specialist III
Reprinted from Winter 2020

The classic disagreement has been tossed around for years between conservationists and farmers: natural resources conservation versus production, soil and water quality in a tug-of-war with the bottom line. Traditionally, the answer has been payments of some sort from the government to producers to make up for the lost profits that are thought to be the result of conservation.

In recent years, conservationists have come up with evidence-based information to aid in selling conservation to landowners, pointing out things like improved herd health and increased weight gain as a result of fencing cattle out of streams. In addition, the conservation-minded can demonstrate improved water quality in the treated streams.

Virginia's Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) developed and published a document titled "Streamside Livestock Exclusion: A tool for increasing farm income and improving water quality" by R. Zeckoski, B. Benham & C. Lunsford (September 2007). This provides scientific proof that when it comes to livestock exclusion, conservation and increased profits are not mutually exclusive.

Alternative water sources such as frost-free troughs fed by wells are a key to these increased profits and as the document states, studies show an increase of roughly an extra pound per day for steers as well as heifers due to having clean drinking water. One Augusta County farmer has seen a 5-10% increase in weight gain since fencing out a stream and providing alternative water. Cattle have often been seen walking through a stream crossing to get water from a frost-free trough.

This booklet also illustrates the reduction of disease rates once cattle are removed from the streams and the muddy, dirty, unsanitary conditions that one commonly finds when cattle have free access to surface water. It identifies foot rot, environmental mastitis, jaundice, fever, red nose, bovine virus diarrhea and tuberculosis as problems that a stream exclusion project can lessen dramatically. Also, not having access to steep, muddy banks reduces injuries as well as calving losses.

Along with stream fencing, an additional method of grazing management that has proven to benefit both your land and animal weight is controlled or rotational grazing. Rotational grazing enables the

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producer to control where livestock graze and livestock are then able to better utilize forages. How does it work? It's fairly simple. Take a pasture that is continuously grazed and run a single wire across it. Now you have two paddocks within the same pasture that are each grazed 50% of the time. If you bisect that wire with another wire, you now have four paddocks. However, paddock design needs to be based on landscape, land productivity, water availability and the number and types of animals in the system.

What are the benefits of such a system? First and foremost, you improve the performance of the forages in your paddocks because they have more time to recuperate after being grazed and you keep them in an active stage of growth. You can produce more forage per acre per year. Livestock then eat more and what they eat is of higher nutritional value. This also leads to a stronger root system and increases the volume of water held in the roots. This is especially important during times of low rainfall or even drought. Weed control is better accomplished also. Rotational grazing also tends to promote better water infiltration and leads to less runoff from paddocks which is good for water quality. Nutrients from manure are also distributed more uniformly over the field and not concentrated in certain areas of the field. Plus, if you are worried about agriculture's role in climate change, it is comforting to know that you are helping sequester carbon from the atmosphere and putting it in the soil to improve organic matter content and water infiltration capacity.

Animal weight gain is improved because livestock constantly have nutritious, palatable forages to utilize. Another benefit is improved animal behavior because they are being handled more frequently. This is beneficial when it comes time to vaccinate and wean your livestock. Also, by observing your livestock when moving them into new paddocks, you are able to identify any health issues that can be treated in the early stages.

The best part about adopting a rotational grazing system is the economical benefits involved. Profits can increase because herd health is improved, stocking rate can often be higher, the grazing season is extended and there is less dependence on hay production. Personally, I like the feeling of having leftover hay at the end of the year to carry into the next winter. These benefits, along with the agronomic and environmental improvements for your land, make rotational grazing a practical method of pasture management. If you are interested in rotational grazing systems, contact the District and we can discuss your options.

To receive a copy of the aforementioned publication contact the District. The District currently has cost share funds available to assist with the implementation of wells, troughs and fencing.

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New Virginia Farm Use Law

Brad Jarvis, Extension Agent Madison County

Beginning July 1, 2024, unregistered farm use panel trucks, pickup trucks, and sport utility vehicles must display a DMV-issued permanent farm use placard. Previously, an unofficial farm use tag, not issued by DMV, was sufficient.

A DMV-issued farm placard will be required for unregistered farm use panel trucks, pickup trucks and sport utility vehicles having a gross vehicle rating less than 7,500 pounds that is used exclusively for agricultural or horticultural purposes on lands owned or leased by the vehicle's owner, and not operated on or over any public highway for any purpose other than:

- Operating along a highway for a distance of no more than 75 miles from one part of the owner's land to another, regardless of whether the tracts adjoin
- Taking the vehicle or attached fixtures to and from a repair shop for repairs
- Taking another vehicle exempt from registration or any part or subcomponent of such a vehicle, to or from a repair shop for repairs, including return trip
- Operating along a highway to and from a refuse disposal facility for the purpose of disposing of trash generated on a farm and incidental refuse from the farmer's or his employee's home
- Operating along a highway for a distance of no more than 75 miles for the purpose of obtaining supplies for agricultural or horticultural purposes, seeds, fertilizers, chemicals, or animal feed
- Transporting the vehicle owner between their residence and the land being used for agricultural or horticultural purposes.

The DMV-issued permanent farm use placard is nontransferable and is valid for as long as the owner or lessee uses the vehicle exclusively for one of the farm use purposes listed above. It must be returned to the DMV within 30 days of the vehicle being sold or if the vehicle is no longer being used exclusively for one of the purposes listed above.

The DMV-issued permanent farm use placard costs \$15. The application can be mailed in or brought to the DMV nearest you. If you do not already hold the title for the vehicle there will be an additional \$15 titling fee.

Be prepared to provide:

- Your name and DMV customer number/FEIN/SSN
- Vehicle year, make, model and vehicle identification number
- Approximate location and acreage of the farm or farms
- Type of commodity farmed

A signed statement that the vehicle is insured and will be used only for authorized purposes

A DMV-issued permanent farm use placard **will not be** required for the following categories of unregistered farm use vehicles:

1. A vehicle with a securely attached machine for spraying fruit trees and other plants cultivated by the owner or lessee of the vehicle.
2. Farm machinery or tractor when operated on a highway between one tract of land and another regardless of whether the land is owned by the same person or to and from a repair shop for repairs.
3. Farm vehicles having a gross vehicle weight rating greater than 7,500 pounds

Farm trailers and semitrailers

Unregistered farm use vehicles must be insured under a general liability policy that includes personal injury liability insurance and property damage liability insurance, failure to furnish proof of insurance within 30 days when required by a law-enforcement officer is a traffic infraction punishable by a \$600 fine.

Land Leases

By Sarah Weaver Sharpe, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Greene Unit

As we enter our next growing season, one question that I get often as an Extension Agent is around farm leases- either landowners who want a lease for a farmer looking to rent their land or a farmer who wants to rent new land from someone else. If you are in this situation, there are some important things to consider as you go about leasing land.

The first thing to remember is that working with a lawyer is absolutely the most ideal situation. They can help write a lease that covers all of the legal implications and protects both sides of the lease. I encourage both parties to have legal representation to make sure that each side is protected. Again, I recognize that this is absolutely the most ideal situation and is not necessarily the norm.

If you aren't going to work with a lawyer, the next best thing is to make sure that you have the lease in writing. While a handshake may have been your go-to for years and/or generations, having something in writing is crucial. By law, if the lease is going to cover more than one year, it needs to be in writing. Also, if there are any issues down the road, this makes the "well they said" argument null and void if it's written in a document where that both people have agreed and signed.

The next thing to consider is that a lease should be beneficial and meet the objectives and goals of both the landowner and the farmer. Each party should go into the lease with clear goals and *reasonable* expectations of each other.

The lease should also be very specific. There should be maps attached, preferably with drawings or details. Here are some examples of things that the lease could cover: the specific address of the property, beginning and end dates of the lease, what the process is for renewal, the process for terminating the lease, who has access to the property and when, if hunting rights are allowed, who is responsible for fencing and repairs, who will have the end possession of any improvements or fixtures, what activities are allowed on the land, nutrient management practices, conservation practices, what the rental rate is, who is responsible for fertilizer applications, use of storage on the land, and more. Again, a lease should meet the needs of both parties and should be as specific as possible.

While there isn't a "one size fits all" lease that is recommended, I do often give out the sample lease that can be found at www.aglease101.org. This is a great website that has a few different sample leases that can be used to help guide the lease development process; it gives landowners and farmers some great things to consider as they are developing their own leases. These leases are written for farmers in the Midwest, but they provide a great base to work off of and most of the information is still very relevant for us in Virginia.

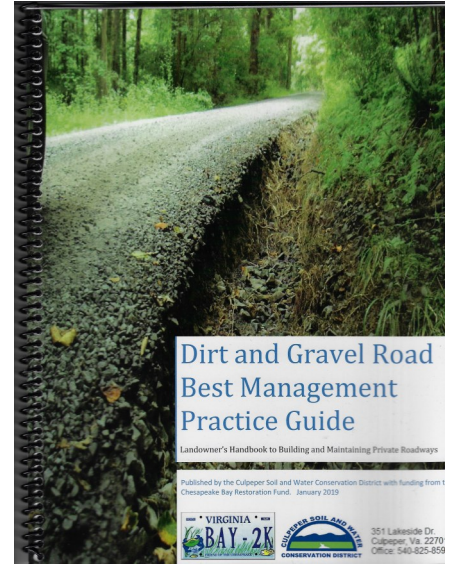
If you would like additional help with this, feel free to reach out to your local Virginia Cooperative Extension office.



Road and Driveway Maintenance Guide Available

Spring is a great time to start maintenance of your road or driveway! Over time, many roads and driveways deteriorate for a variety of reasons: poor initial design or construction, poor maintenance, extreme weather or heavy traffic. In addition to costly repairs, many roads and roadside ditches drain into local streams delivering both sediment and gravel into stream channels. This is destructive to the stream, resulting in loss of stream bottom habitat and channel capacity. Improved maintenance incorporating best management practices (BMPs) can save money and better protect waterways.

Currently available to property owners is the Dirt and Gravel Road BMP Guide, published with funding from the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund. The guide can be found at the Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District website (www.culpeperswcd.org) under Publications. Hard copies can be picked up from CSWCD as well as your local Extension office or Building office. For technical assistance, contact Richard Jacobs at 540-825-8591 or RichardJ@culpeperswcd.org.



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Deer scouting

Finding harvested deer (All hunting stops for the day once drone operations begin)

Mapping & Inspections



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Save Money with Soil Testing to Improve Your Lawn

Caring for the environment also means caring for your lawn. By using proper mowing and maintenance practices, you can enjoy a healthy, beautiful lawn while protecting local streams, rivers and lakes.

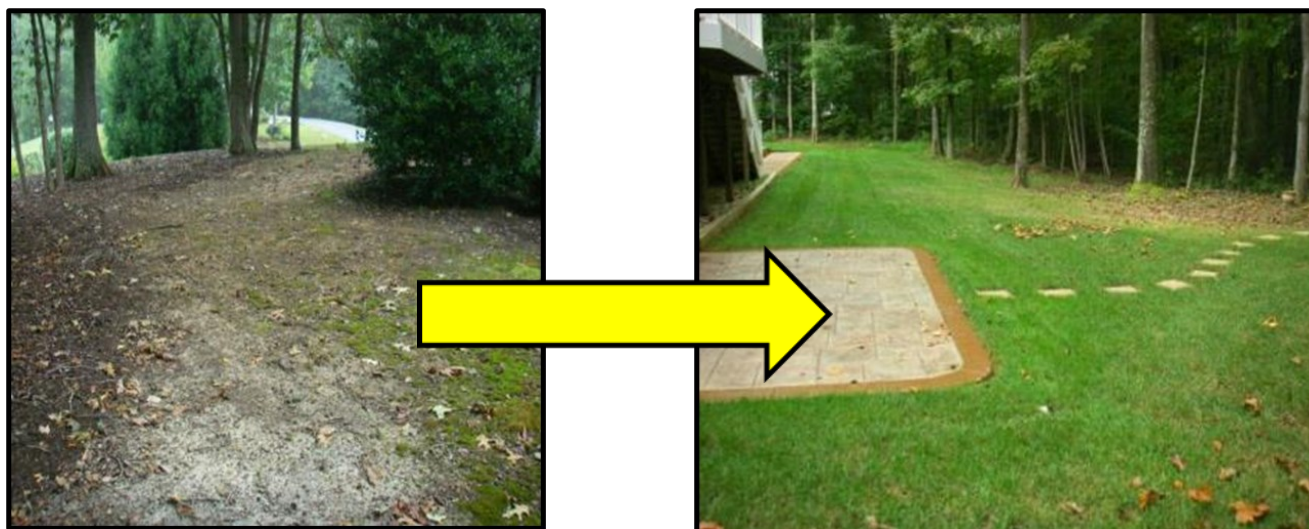
Our homes contain impervious surfaces (rooftop, patio, and driveway) that can't absorb and filter rainfall. The underlying soil characteristics of the lawn can affect how the lawn absorbs and filter the impervious runoff. Soil compaction, low pH (e.g. acid soils) and low nutrients can impact how you grow vegetation in your lawn. Improperly applied or excess fertilizer and other chemicals are not retained in the landscape, and can contribute to harmful algal blooms and other water quality problems.

What is lawn care? It's not just seeding, watering and mowing. We must amend the soil not only to feed the grass but to improve soil structure. Managing clippings and leaves are all part of lawn care too. Returning these byproducts improve the soil and vegetation. How we care for our lawn determines the degree of the environmental benefits and impacts we achieve.

Healthy lawns can help prevent erosion, reduce runoff, and filter rainwater. A healthy lawn has uniform and mature vegetation that inhibits erosion and retains nutrients. A healthy lawn can capture over an inch of rain; traps dust and dirt; convert carbon dioxide to oxygen; and reduces the heat island effect with air temperatures up to 30 degrees cooler than pavement. A sparse lawn with bare soil needs improvement either by amending the soil or selecting different landscape plants.

The soil should be tested every three years. A composite soil sample of the whole yard is collected. A soil test includes information on the amount of nutrients, organic matter and pH level. The proper balance is essential to a healthy lawn. Additional assessments of patchy bare spots could be done to verify foot traffic, recent disturbance, disease or standing water.

The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District is working with your local Extension agent to make sure homeowners like yourself have the knowledge and resources to do your part. The District is offering a voucher to cover the cost of the soil test. For these vouchers please contact the District at 540-825-8591 or stephanieD@culpeperswcd.org. For more information on lawn care see the Virginia Extension Publication list: https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/tags.resource.html?tag=pubs_ext_vt_edu:lawns.



Virginia's Prescription Drug Take Back Program

Drug Take Back Program (state.va.us)

Virginia's statewide Drug Take-Back Day is an effort to prevent prescription drug abuse and to keep trace drugs out of our lakes and streams. In communities all across the Commonwealth, it is a day where citizens can drop off their unused, unwanted, or expired medications at their local law enforcement agencies for safe disposal.

The Office of the Attorney General, the Secretary of Public Safety, the Virginia State Police, and local law enforcement agencies worked together to participate in this nationwide U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration's National Take-Back Day.

Drug Take-Back Day is a day where citizens can drop off their unused, unwanted, or expired medications **at their local law enforcement agencies** for safe disposal.

Drug Take-Back Day is an effort to prevent prescription drug abuse and to keep trace drugs out of our lakes and streams (wastewater treatment plants cannot remove many compounds found in medications; so when flushed or put in a landfill, drugs are discharged into our surface and ground water and consumed by fish and wildlife).

- **It's anonymous and free**
- **Prescription and over-the-counter medications will be accepted**
- **Please, no intravenous solutions, injectables, or needles**

Why are drug take-back programs important?

Take-back programs are the safest method for disposing of prescription drugs because they are organized and closely monitored by local, state, and federal government agencies. These agencies ensure the proper disposal of the drugs in accordance with federal law.

The dangers of not properly disposing of prescription drugs

A growing concern across the Commonwealth is prescription medications being taken from medicine cabinets or the trash by those who abuse drugs. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2006, nearly seven million Americans over the age of 12 reported abusing prescription medications. In fact, approximately 60 percent of people who abuse prescription painkillers indicate that they obtained the prescription drugs from friends or relatives for free, often taking the drugs without permission.

Children or pets may ingest undisposed or improperly disposed medications. This can lead to overdose, injury, and even death.

Many people believe that flushing or simply throwing away drugs is the best way to dispose of medications, however, if not disposed of properly, the drugs can contaminate the groundwater and waterways. Wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove or process many compounds found in medications. Instead, when flushed or disposed in the ground, the drugs can be discharged into our surface and ground water.

Pharmaceutical contaminants in water have been shown to cause serious harm to fish and wildlife living in and near rivers and lakes. Humans can also be exposed to these chemicals when they drink water drawn from contaminated bodies of water or eat wild game or fish. The long-term human health risks from exposure to even very small amounts of these chemicals is not yet known.

Annually the National Prescription Take Back Day was April 22. However, year-round prescriptions can be turned into the pharmacy at any CVS, Safeway in Culpeper, Town of Culpeper Police Department and Greene, Madison and Rappahannock County Sheriff's Offices.

Converting from Wildtype to Novel Tall Fescue

Conservation Innovation Grant Project Fact Sheet CIG # 69-33A7-16-1243

Produced by Dr. John Fike, Project Director

Tall Fescue:

Tall fescue is the predominant forage in the upper South, largely because it is well-adapted to the region’s soils and climatic conditions, tolerates drought, is competitive and persists under a wide range of management. This is largely due to its association with a fungal endophyte (a fungus living within the plant).

Wildtype vs. Novel Endophytes

Endophytes support tall fescue growth and persistence, but the common, ‘wildtype’ strain found in ‘KY31’ tall fescue produces toxic alkaloids that harm livestock (Figure 1). Once this was realized as a problem, scientists removed the endophyte and promoted “endophyte-free” fescue - but it did not persist. The newest technology has been to create the best of both worlds. Novel, non-toxic endophytes have been discovered and combined with tall fescue to create a pasture grass with high persistence.

Deciding Whether to Renovate

Most producers recognize the signs of fescue toxicosis (e.g., rough hair coats, missing tail switches, poor weight gain and low reproduction). Pasture testing can aid decisions about pasture renovation and management (Figure 2).

How Much Renovation Is Enough?

It may be challenging financially to renovate the whole farm. However, research from Arkansas (Caldwell et al., 2013) indicates that planting 25% of a farm with novel fescue for use during breeding and weaning periods can improve farm profit.

Renovating Toxic Pastures

Keys to successful renovation include:

- Eliminating toxic fescue plants and seed
- Ensuring viable endophyte in novel fescue
- Having suitable establishment conditions

Endophytes in tall fescue are passed from mother plant to seedling through the seed - and fescue is a prolific seed producer. To avoid contaminating a new planting of novel fescue, it is critical to kill all the existing toxic

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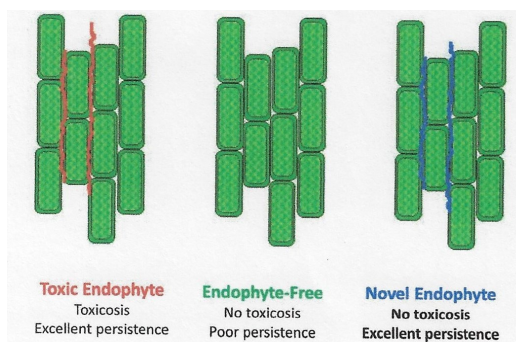


Figure 1. A common schematic of tall fescue plant cells with different endophyte status.

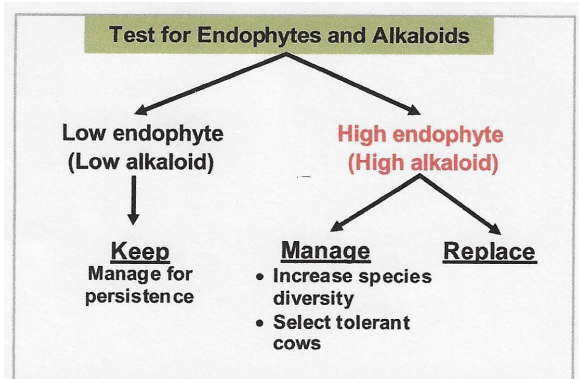


Figure 2. Decision tree for fescue management based on endophyte presence or alkaloid levels.

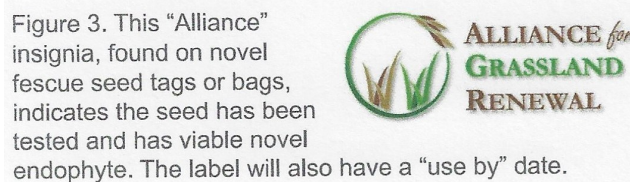


Figure 3. This “Alliance” insignia, found on novel fescue seed tags or bags, indicates the seed has been tested and has viable novel endophyte. The label will also have a “use by” date.

Pond Management Resources Revisited

This article is a courtesy reprint from Spring 2023 since this is the time of year to start thinking about that pond and get ahead of the “growing season” so to speak. For new owners of ponds, careful observations for a year or two is a good place to start.

Listed below is a series of resources the District calls to your attention that can assist landowners in making informed decisions or informed purchases regarding the management of their ponds. This by no means is meant to be an exhaustive list but a good place to begin to get answers to your questions and understand many of the options available to you. District staff are available to assist you with understanding many pond management situations and assist you with understanding the pros and cons of management decisions you may be contemplating. In addition, one of the publications has a robust list of pond management consultants you may wish to engage. As a public entity, the District does not endorse any of them but help circulate the consultant list as a service to landowners.

A very good place to start is the publication Private Pond Management from the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources. It includes weed identification and control options, pond renovation, fish stocking and management, habitat management and more. It also has the list of consultants referenced above. In our opinion, this publication get two thumbs up! <https://dwr.virginia.gov/fishing/private-pond-management/>

Next on the list of resources to be aware of are 3 publications from Virginia Tech. We let them speak for themselves.

- **Control Methods for Aquatic Plants in Ponds and Lakes** https://vtechworks.lib.vt.edu/bitstream/handle/10919/48945/420-251_pdf.pdf
- **Clearing Muddy Pond Waters** https://www.pubs.ext.vt.edu/content/dam/pubs_ext_vt_edu/420/420-250/420-250_pdf.pdf
- **Liming Acidified lakes and Ponds** <https://www.fauquiercounty.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/5435/635901078579970000>

You may also want to be aware of the following publication from North Carolina State University. It covers a lot of additional useful information: <https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/pond-management-guide>.

Now if you are considering building a pond you should be aware of the following publications.

- <https://nrcspad.sc.egov.usda.gov/DistributionCenter/pdf.aspx?productID=115>
- <http://www.culpeperswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Pond-Planning-brochure-2020.pdf>


You should also be aware of any permitting or other regulatory requirements at the local, state and/or federal levels. A good place to start is to contact the US Army Corps of Engineers and your County government. And of course, it's always good to consider your off-site impacts on neighbors and downstream, particularly during construction or during a high magnitude storm event.

And one final note lest you may have read this before and forgotten;...click [here](#) for a link to our previous pond article.



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Small Farm Outreach

The Small Farm Outreach Program (SFOP), a part of Cooperative Extension at Virginia State University, educates and empowers small, limited-resource, socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers and ranchers to own, operate and sustain farms and ranches independently with agricultural training programs that improve farm management skills and quality of life. For more information, visit <https://www.ext.vsu.edu/small-farm-outreach-program>.

Drinking Water Testing Clinics for Residential Wells

The Virginia Household Water Quality Program (VAHWQP) is a Virginia Cooperative Extension program that is designed to improve the water quality and health of Virginians by evaluating private water supplies. Initiated in 1989, VAHWQP drinking water clinics have been conducted in nearly every county across Virginia, and 35,000 samples have been analyzed and results confidentially returned to participants. The best part: your water test results are explained in a helpful meeting, where ways of preventing contamination and treating water quality problems are also addressed. Drinking water clinics are organized by your local Extension Agent and Virginia Tech faculty in the Biological Systems Engineering Department. **Participation is voluntary and all information is kept strictly confidential.** Anyone with a private water supply system (including wells, springs, and cisterns) may participate.

The Virginia Well Owner Network (VWON) is a linked, capacity-building program. A group of Virginia Cooperative Extension agents and volunteers are trained in proper well construction and location, maintenance and protection of wells and springs, interpretation of water analysis, and water treatment options. The network is an excellent resource for homeowners.

Samples are analyzed for the following: iron, manganese, nitrate, lead, arsenic, fluoride, sulfate, pH, total dissolved solids, hardness, sodium, copper, total coliform bacteria and E. Coli bacteria. Confidential reports are easy to read and accompanied by a sheet explaining what the numbers mean.

The local date for Culpeper and Rappahannock is July 19. The date for Greene, Madison & Orange is September 27.

- Culpeper: Linda Baldwin at lindab75@vt.edu or 540-727-3435 x353
- Greene: Sarah Sharpe, seweaver@vt.edu or 434-985-5236
- Madison: Brad Jarvis at bjarvis@vt.edu or 540-948-6881
- Orange: Clare Lillard at lclare4@vt.edu or 540-672-1361
- Rappahannock: Linda Baldwin at lindab75@vt.edu or 540-727-3435 x353

Culpeper SWCD regionally sponsors these clinics to help reduce the cost of the tests for participants.

It is our understanding that in Culpeper and Rappahannock Counties there may be additional opportunities for low income households.

Since 2006, 510 samples in the Culpeper District have been tested, covering over 850 people.

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fescue and to keep any toxic seed from growing.

The seed can survive for some time, but the endophyte will die by or before 18 months. Thus, toxic seeds should be kept out fields to be renovated for a similar period of time. This can be managed close grazing or clipping.

Time and poor storage conditions can kill the endophyte in a seed bag - just as in the field, Use novel fescue seed that has been certified by the Alliance for Grassland Renewal (Figure 3). with close grazing or clipping.

Establishing new stands presents risks, but many factors are within a grower’s control.

- Fall planting is recommended
- Ensure soil pH and fertility are adequate; apply lime and nutrients according to soil test
- Have fields weed- and fescue-free at planting
- Be sure fields are not affected by carryover herbicide
- Do not plant seed too deep
- Kill broadleaf weeds in late winter if needed
- Fertilize at planting and in March
- Let grass establish before planting legumes Renovation Schemes

Three general schemes (Figure 4) are used for fescue renovation. The schemes use at least two herbicide applications, with the latter helping ensure escapes are killed. The spray-wait-spray approach may be the most economical, but many farmers choose spray-smother-spray to help meet forage supply needs. The smother crops used in these systems should have upright growth habits to allow better herbicide penetration to the understory when they are killed out. Avoid low-growing grasses such as annual ryegrass or crabgrass that can cover (and protect) escapes. [Converting-from-Wildtype-to-Novel-Tall-Fescue.pdf](https://www.vaforges.org/Converting-from-Wildtype-to-Novel-Tall-Fescue.pdf) ([vaforges.org](https://www.vaforges.org/))

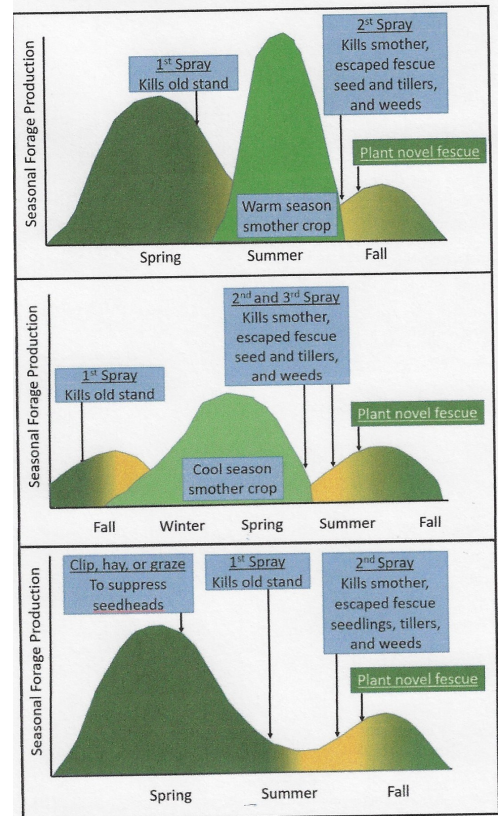


Figure 4. Spray-summer smother-spray (top), spray fall smother-spray (middle), and spray-wait-spray (bottom) schemes are used to renovate toxic fescue pastures. Note that the fall smother regime starts in fall and covers a much longer span of time.

Virginia
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July 2020

nrcs.usda.gov/

Missouri Grazing Manual Available

By David H. Massie, CSWCD Conservation Specialist III

The Culpeper Soil and Water Conservation District has copies of the Missouri Grazing Manual available to producers interested in expanding their grazing knowledge. This grazing manual encompasses so many different aspects of grazing management – soils, plant growth, nutrient cycling, water system and fence layout, grazer’s arithmetic, and economics of grazing. This manual also brings together different groups of researchers, educators, and producers with broad experience in land management, forage, and livestock systems to provide a comprehensive guide to understanding and managing grassland ecosystems.

This manual will assist producers with furthering their knowledge of grazing management and provide more detailed, specific information they will need to enhance their grazing techniques. Jim Gerrish, a nationally recognized, well-respected grazer, is one of the key contributors and editors of this manual. His background in agronomy, as well as forage management and research, adds an unparalleled perspective which is useful for the beginning grazer as well as the seasoned grazer.

The distribution of these manuals will be on a first come, first serve basis. We also have pasture grazing sticks for sale for \$5 each. Pasture grazing sticks are a great tool for helping producers “train their eyes” to the amount of forage available for their livestock. A two page instruction manual comes with the pasture grazing stick, and District Staff will be happy to assist using this valuable tools on your farm.

Emerald Ash Borer Cost-Share Program Cost Assistance for Protecting Ash Trees

Applications are now open for the Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) Emerald Ash Borer Cost-Share Program, which offers cost reimbursement for treating ash trees to protect from the invasive emerald ash borer. Landowners and organizations (including municipalities, not-for-profits, educational institutions and homeowner associations) can apply until June 16.

The cost share reimburses up to 50% of the costs for emamectin benzoate insecticide trunk injections by a certified applicator, up to \$1,250 per landowner or \$5,000 per organization.

To be eligible, treatments must be for green, white, black, blue, pumpkin, or Carolina ash trees at least 12 inches in diameter at chest height. A DOF forester must assess trees prior to treatment to be considered for cost share funds.

The emerald ash borer is the most destructive forest insect ever to invade the U.S., having killed hundreds of millions of ash trees. This cost-share program aims to safeguard the future of Virginia's ash resource by making treatments more affordable and getting more trees treated. When applied correctly, emamectin benzoate treatments are effective at protecting ash trees from emerald ash borer for up to three years and can save landowners the cost of removing dead ash trees.

"If you have an ash tree you love, now is the time to treat it," said DOF Forest Health Technician Amanda Conrad. "Waiting until you see a problem could mean it's already too late."

To get started protecting your ash trees, [contact your DOF forester](#), or learn more about this cost-share program by visiting DOF's [website](#). If interested in applying, follow this [link](#) for program information and application. If you have any questions, contact Program Administrator Amanda Conrad at amanda.conrad@dof.virginia.gov.

About the Virginia Department of Forestry

The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$23 billion annually.

Headquartered in Charlottesville, the agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it's been doing now for more than 100 years. DOF is an equal opportunity provider.



Emerald Ash Borer (photo courtesy of VDOF)



New Forester Assignments:

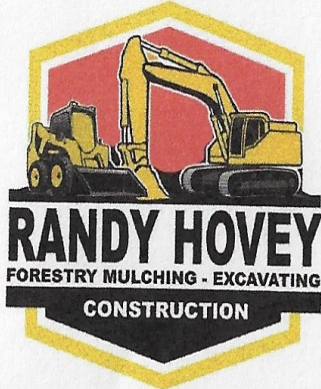
Culpeper & Rappahannock: Peter Schoderbek 434-282-4169

peter.schoderbek@dof.virginia.gov

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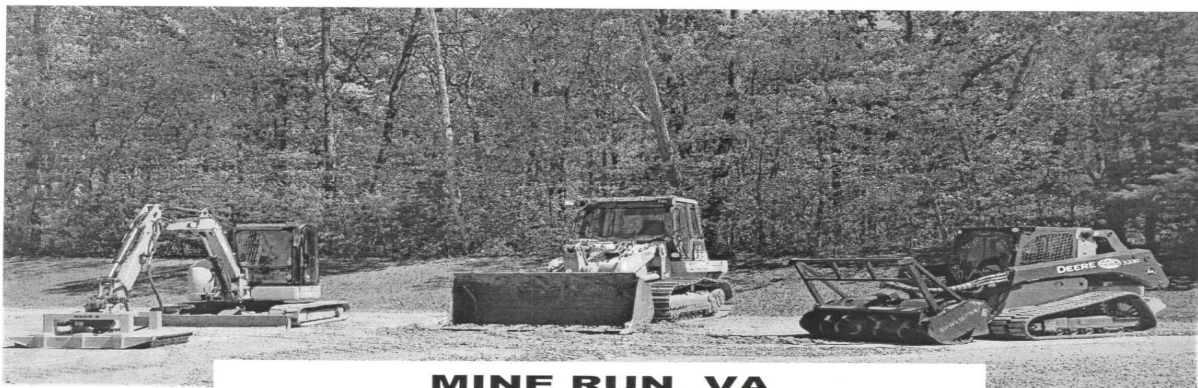
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District Director & Staff Recognized

The Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD) held its Annual Membership Meeting in December 2023 in Norfolk, Virginia. Conservationists from across the Commonwealth assembled for a 3-day event of meetings, trainings and legislative updates. The final evening of the event is dedicated each year to recognizing significant achievements and recognitions in the conservation community. Two individuals were recognized for their outstanding work in the Culpeper District.

Kendall Dellinger, Culpeper District Conservation Specialist II, received a Chaffin Employee Award for her hard work and due diligence at learning her trade. Shown here (below left) being presented with her award by Richard Chaffin of Peaks of Otter District and Secretary/Treasurer of the VASWCD.

Kendall has been employed by the District for over 6 years and has reached high levels of productivity and professionalism and is always willing to take on responsibility.

Also recognized at the banquet was long time Virginia Cooperative Extension Agricultural Agent-Madison, Brad Jarvis for his ongoing contributions to the conservation movement. Brad was recognized for his many years of service as an Appointed Director and his ongoing contributions as an Associate Director. The E.C. Compton Award, named after a man who made outstanding contributions to many organizations during his lifetime and who was from Greene County. This Award is one the preeminent awards given by the VASWCD. It is good to see the E.C. Compton Award back home in the Culpeper District.



Backyard Conservation Funds Available

By Richard Jacobs, III, PE, CSWCD Conservation Specialist III

Conserving water while using attractive gardening and landscaping practices beautifies your yard, attracts beneficial pollinators, adds curb appeal and also helps improve the environment by reducing the amount of storm water runoff from your property. Creative management of those small areas of your front or backyard to address problem areas (too wet, too dry, doesn't drain, won't grow grass, etc...) now has funding available to support simple, on the ground landscape practices that benefit both you and the local environment. The Virginia Conservation Assistance Program or VCAP provides financial assistance to residential, institutional and commercial property owners to implement such practices. Payment rates vary among the practices but generally are focused on providing up to 80 percent of the cost. The district will provide technical resources for your planning efforts and visit your site to better understand what you hope to achieve. For more information on VCAP visit <http://vaswcd.org/vcap> or contact the District at 540-825-8591 or richardj@culpeperswcd.org

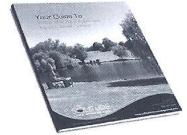


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