



Volume 3: February 2024

# LIVE STOCK

companion 

## MONTHLY TIP

Stay vigilant for cool-season weeds. When the forecast indicates three or more consecutive days with temperatures exceeding 60°F, cool-season weeds will be still actively growing, and herbicides can be applied. This window provides an opportune time to apply herbicides effectively.

For detailed information on appropriate herbicides and rates check the UT Extension publication: [Weed Control Manual for Tennessee](#)



What's in your bale?  
[soillab.tennessee.edu](http://soillab.tennessee.edu)

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*“Anytime you put a machine between the mouth of a cow and her feed source, it’s costing you money!”*

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Forage Quotes & Concepts, Volume 3

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## FORAGE MANAGEMENT

*Dr. Bruno Pedreira, UT Extension Forage Specialist*

After the last drought fall, some pastures may need to be renovated, but a suitable fertility program for the upcoming growing season is needed. Thus, I strongly advise conducting a soil analysis to quantify the lack of nutrients. Three points to be considered: 1) Identify sources of variability in the area to be sampled. If you have fertilized half of the pasture/hayfields in the past, take two samples (fertilized and unfertilized). If there is a slope, split it into a hilltop, side slope, and bottom; 2) Take around 15 soil cores from a homogenous area, put them all in a clean bucket, mix them, and send the equivalent of a cup to the lab. I would request pH, P, and K analyses, at least; and 3) Make sure of the depth. All samples need to be taken 6 inches deep. Shallow sampling will lead to higher soil nutrient levels resulting in recommendations lower than truly needed. Guaranteeing that pastures or hay fields receive the essential nutrients to increase the probability of achieving optimal growth, stand persistence, and economic benefits.

## CATTLE NUTRITION

*Dr. Katie Mason, UT Extension Beef Cattle Nutrition Specialist*

The occurrence of grass tetany, or low Mg levels in the blood, is most prominent in late winter and early in the spring as forage starts to green up and grow rapidly. The disorder is most often seen in animals grazing cool-season grasses and especially affects animals in early lactation. Common symptoms of grass tetany include nervousness, muscle twitching, and staggering. Older animals with suckling calves are particularly susceptible. The most dependable form of control is supplying a mineral supplement with a relatively high concentration of magnesium. Across the Southeast, the most common time to see grass tetany is mid-February through mid-April, so this coincides with the time that high-magnesium mineral should be fed to cattle. Magnesium is not stored in the body, so it is pertinent for cattle to meet their intake requirements daily. General guidelines for supplementing magnesium can be found below:

- Provide at least 1 oz. per day of magnesium oxide to yield at least 0.6 oz. of magnesium. “Hi-mag” minerals typically have around 12 to 14% Mg.
- The supplement should contain either magnesium oxide or magnesium sulfate (not magnesite or dolomitic limestone).
- Loose mineral mixtures are preferred.
- Keep hay available until cattle completely stop consuming it.
- After starting cattle on high-magnesium supplements, continue until “danger” is past in the late spring.

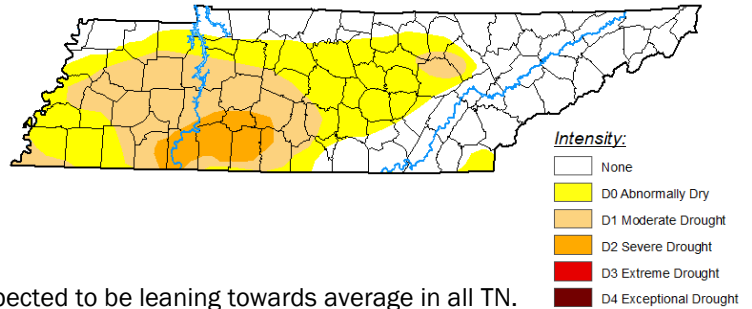
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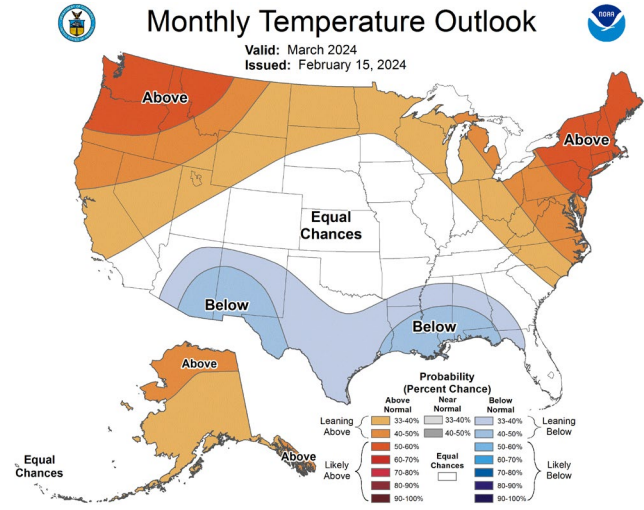
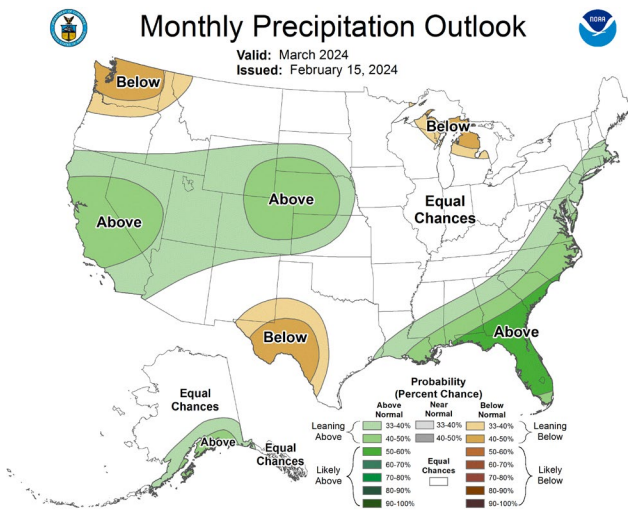
## WEATHER

Dr. Bruno Pedreira, UT Extension Forage Specialist

In January, the average temperature and precipitation for the state of Tennessee were +3°F and +1.89” departing from the last 10-y average, which is 37.8°F and 4.52”, respectively [ncei.noaa.gov](https://ncei.noaa.gov)



For February, temperatures and precipitation are expected to be leaning towards average in all TN. Northwest counties may have above temperatures and below-average precipitation. Drought monitor (Feb. 15) is showing some improvement, although is still highlighting most of the state from abnormally (D0) to severe (D2) drought. The fact that drought signals are still present shows how dry it was during earlier months. [droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

- [Live Stock](#) Join us for our live stream March 13, 2024 at 2 pm ET.
- [Silvopasture Systems of the Southeast United States](#) March 7, 2024 - 1 to 3 pm ET.



**Photo of the Month** - taken by B. Pedreira, Annual Ryegrass Variety Trial, UT Plateau Research and Education Center, Cumberland County, TN.

This and other useful information can be found at your local UT Extension office, or on our website.

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