



Volume 16: March 2025

LIVE STOCK companion

MONTHLY TIP

March is a great time to check soil pH, which is a key indicator of the soil's chemical environment and nutrient availability. The optimal pH range for common Tennessee grasses is between 6.0 and 7.0, while legumes like alfalfa and clovers thrive best with a pH above 6.5. Keep in mind that adjusting soil pH takes time, lime requires moisture (rainfall) and can take up to a year to fully react. If your soil test indicates low pH, apply lime as soon as possible. Doing so now will improve soil conditions in time for fall seeding, ensuring a better environment for seedling establishment by September.

Check your soil, apply the correct lime rate, and give your pastures the best start. Maintaining the right pH ensures forage growth and long-term pasture health!

Dr. Bruno Pedreira
UT Extension Forage Specialist



“When you’ve finished changing, you’re finished.”

-Benjamin Franklin

RESEEDING STRATEGIES FOR HAY FEEDING AREAS

Dr. Bruno Pedreira, UT Extension Forage Specialist, Director of the UT Beef and Forage Center

After feeding hay during the winter, it is time to smooth and reseed hay feeding and heavy traffic areas. Bare soil can quickly become a hotspot for weeds and erosion. Lightly level the ground to prevent this, then run a cultipacker to improve soil-seed contact and ensure better establishment. If timing allows, reseed with oats or annual ryegrass in March. The best planting window is February 20 to April 1. Oats should be seeded at 100 to 150 lbs. per acre at a depth of 1 to 2 inches, while annual ryegrass needs 20 to 30 lbs. per acre and should not be planted deeper than ½ inch. If it's too late for cool-season forages, consider summer annuals like crabgrass, which thrive in hot summers and provide valuable forage when tall fescue goes dormant. To establish crabgrass, follow the same ground preparation steps, but drill 3 to 5 lbs. per acre for the best results. If you need to broadcast, do it at 5 lbs. per acre for better coverage. Investing time in pasture recovery now will improve forage availability, reduce erosion, and reduce weed pressure. Whether you plant cool-season or summer annuals, a well-managed pasture is more productive and resilient. Let's set the stage for a great grazing season ahead!

MANAGING PASTURE-ASSOCIATED LAMINITIS IN EQUIDS DURING SPRING

Dr. Jennie L.Z. Ivey, PhD, PAS, Associate Professor and Equine Extension Specialist

Spring is a high-risk season for pasture-associated laminitis in horses, ponies, donkeys and mules due to rapid grass growth and non-structural carbohydrates (NSCs) levels. Laminitis is a painful and potentially debilitating condition caused by inflammation of the laminae, a soft tissue in the hoof that connects the hoof wall to the coffin bone. Laminitis is often triggered by metabolic disturbances linked to diet. Certain equids are more prone to developing laminitis, particularly those with underlying metabolic issues. Equids with insulin resistance/dysregulation, Equine Metabolic Syndrome (EMS), or Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction (PPID)/Cushing's disease, and those with a history of laminitis are at highest risk. Native and easy-keeper breeds are also more susceptible due to their evolutionary adaptations to sparse forage. NSCs – comprising sugars, starches, and fructans – can spike in spring grasses. Forages with NSC levels above 10% are considered dangerous for sensitive animals. Early morning grass may contain lower NSCs, while afternoon and evening grass, after a day of photosynthesis, can be much higher. To protect at-risk equids, pasture grazing access must be carefully controlled.

Strategies include:

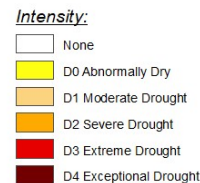
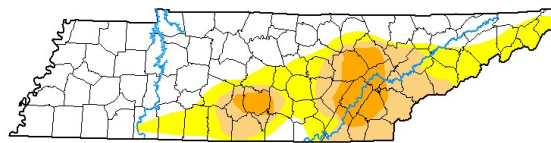
- Limiting grazing time, especially during peak NSC periods (afternoon and evening).
- Using grazing muzzles to reduce intake.
- Dry lot turnout (non-grass paddocks) with low-NSC hay to eliminate pasture exposure.
- Monitoring body condition to prevent obesity.
- Regular exercise to improve insulin sensitivity.
- Testing pasture NSC content, if possible, to guide grazing decisions.

Veterinary oversight is crucial for animals with a history of laminitis or known metabolic issues. Preventive measures taken during spring can greatly reduce the risk of this serious condition and help maintain equine health throughout the grazing season. Contact your veterinarian, county Extension agent, or Equine Extension Specialist for more information.

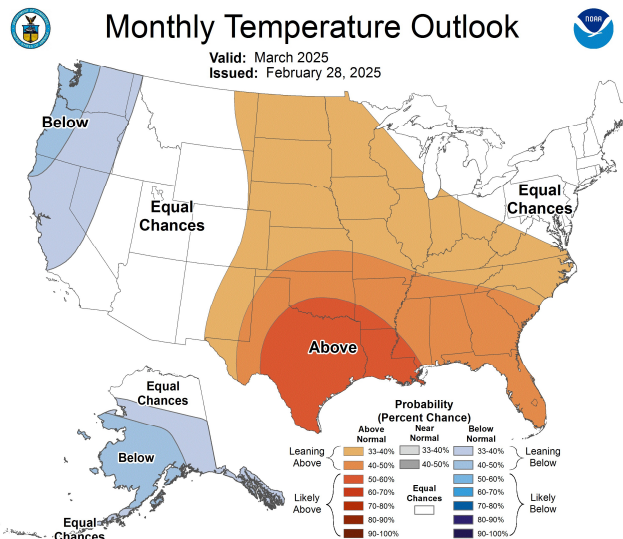
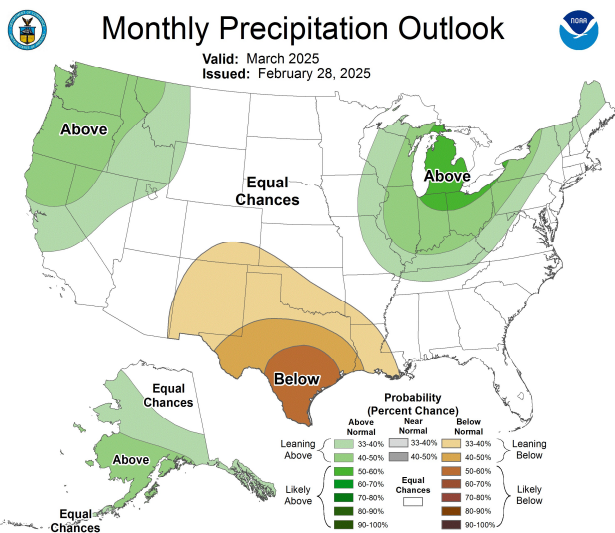
WEATHER

Dr. Bruno Pedreira, UT Extension Forage Specialist

February temperature averaged 4.2°F higher than the average, and rainfall was 2.3 inches below the 10-year average of 43.7°F with 6.7 inches of precipitation. ncei.noaa.gov



After recent rain, only 42% of Tennessee is still experiencing some level of drought (D0-D2), with no counties in D3 or D4. In Middle Tennessee, Bedford, Marshall, and Coffee counties are in severe drought (D2). In East Tennessee, D2 conditions now affect Morgan, Cumberland, Roane, Bledsoe, Rhea, Meigs, Hamilton, Monroe, McMinn, Bradley, and Loudon counties. March temperatures are expected to be above average statewide, with West Tennessee likely to be hotter than the East. Most of the northern part of the state has an above-average chance of precipitation, while the southern part has equal chances. droughtmonitor.unl.edu



UPCOMING EVENTS

- [Live Stock](#) - Join us for our broadcast on April 9, 2025 at 2 PM ET
- [Southeast Tennessee Beef Summit](#) April 25, 2025 at 7:45 AM – 2 PM ET

Details can found on UTBEEF.COM



Photo of the Month by Peter Bimmel: The Novel Endophyte Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop was held in Evansville, TN, through a partnership between the Alliance for Grassland Renewal and the UT Beef and Forage Center.

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

UTBEEF.COM

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