



Volume 17: April 2025

LIVE STOCK

companion



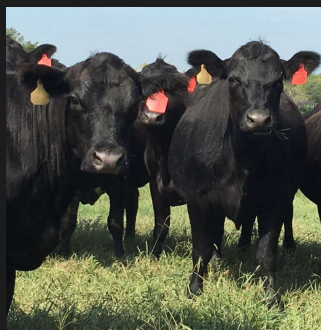
MONTHLY TIP

April is a key time to start planning for summer annual forages. Begin by assessing your pasture needs and determining if supplemental summer forage will be necessary. Keep in mind that tall fescue typically goes dormant during the hot, dry months. So having alternatives like crabgrass, sudangrass, or millet can help maintain or improve livestock performance.

It's also time to gear up for hay season. Before the first cutting, take time to inspect and service equipment. Check balers, mowers, and tedders to ensure everything's in working order. Make sure twine, net wrap, and other supplies are stocked and ready.

Good prep now can save time (and headaches) later. A strong start to the season leads to better forage and livestock production.

Dr. Bruno Pedreira
UT Extension Forage Specialist



UTBEEF.COM

"It takes grass to grow grass."

-Jim Gerrish

CARCASS COMPOSTING FOR BEGINNERS

Mr. Sawyer Main, Extension Assistant, Department of Animal Science

Dr. Shawn Hawkins, Associate Professor, Department of Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science

Dr. Jennie Ivey, Associate Professor, UT Extension Equine Specialist

Dr. Forbes Walker, Professor, Department of Biosystems Engineering and Soil Science

Composting is a practical, cost-effective method of large animal carcass disposal, particularly in agricultural settings. Static pile mortality composting is especially effective when proper materials and procedures are followed. Begin by selecting a slightly sloped site away from property lines. Step 1 involves laying a two-foot-thick base of carbon-rich material—sawdust, wood shavings, or utility woodchips work best. Step 2 is placing the carcass squarely in the center of the base, with all extremities at least two feet from the edge to allow for full coverage. Step 3 requires mounding another two feet of the carbon material over the carcass to shed rainfall and insulate the pile. It's important not to turn the pile, dismember or tie down the carcass, or "seed" the material with previously composted product—microbial activity will occur naturally. Once established, the pile should be left undisturbed except to maintain its shape. Elevated internal temperatures (typically 130 -160°F) indicate active decomposition and pathogen destruction. With wood-based amendments, the process is largely complete in about six months, resulting in a stable, humus-like product that can be safely applied to land. This method not only meets regulatory and environmental standards but also offers a cost-effective and low-maintenance solution for managing livestock mortality.

MANAGED GRAZING

Dr. Katie Mason, Assistant Professor, UT Extension Beef Cattle Nutrition Specialist

There are many factors that influence grazing management decisions. Some objectives to consider when managing grazing are optimal forage production, efficient utilization, plant persistence, and desired animal performance. The grazer makes decisions based on these objectives, while also considering external factors like time and labor availability, land availability, and weather conditions. Flexibility is key – no one approach will work on all farms, nor does one approach work for different seasons. Grazing intensity is likely the most important of the grazing management tools that we have. It relates to the severity of grazing, or in different terms, stocking rate: the relationship between animal weight and amount of forage available. When balancing stocking rate, it is important to target an optimal level of output for both the animal and the acreage. Grazing frequency is essentially the method used to graze, such as continuous or rotational. Selecting the method gives the grazer a way to fine-tune the grazing system, but it is still most important to focus on grazing intensity as this will have the most impact on plant persistence. Stocking methods may depend on resources such as water supply, fencing, and labor availability. Timing of grazing relates to the growth stage of the plant or amount of carbohydrate reserves available in a plant's roots. Properly timed grazing ensures plant recovery and long-term productivity. While there is no universal grazing strategy, understanding and applying these principles helps graziers navigate the balance between science and intuition, leading to more productive and sustainable systems.

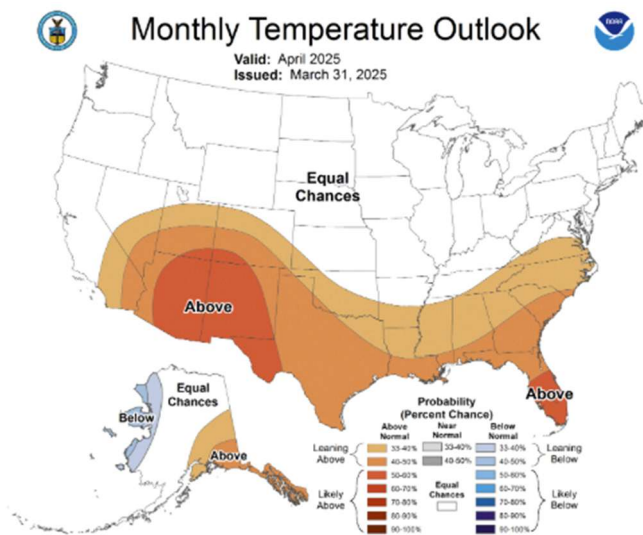
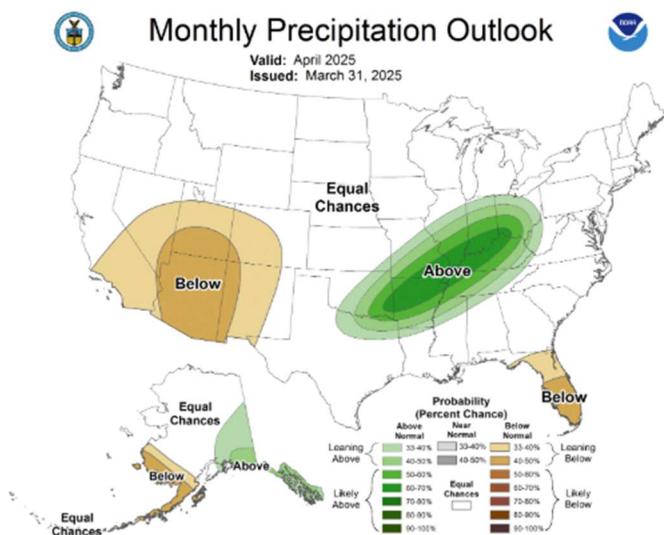
WEATHER

Dr. Bruno Pedreira, UT Extension Forage Specialist

March temperature averaged 1.7 °F higher than the average, and rainfall was 0.80 inches below the 10-year average of 51.4 °F with 5.8 inches of precipitation. ncei.noaa.gov



After months of dry soil, March finally brought the rain we had been hoping for. As of March 31st, 96% of the state is officially out of drought, a major boost for spring planting and pasture recovery. A few areas in the northeast are still hanging on to dryness. Johnson and Carter Counties remain in moderate drought (D1), while Sullivan, Washington, and Unicoi Counties are listed as abnormally dry (D0). So, while most of the state is in better shape, that corner still needs a bit more moisture. Looking ahead, May is expected to bring above-average temperatures across East Tennessee. Rainfall chances are looking better than normal for most of the state—though unfortunately, the areas that need it most in the northeast may miss out a bit. Here's hoping those skies stay generous and the growing season gets off to a strong start. droughtmonitor.unl.edu



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Southeast Tennessee Beef Summit**
April 25, 2025 at 7:45 AM - 2 PM ET
- **Live.Stock** - Join us for our broadcast on
May 14, 2025 at 2 PM ET

Details can be found on UTBEEF.COM



Photo of the Month by Dr. Bruno Pedreira: University of Tennessee
Researchers and Extension Specialists visiting Kapiti Research Farm in Kenya.

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

UTBEEF.COM

The University of Tennessee is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA institution in the provision of its education and employment programs and services. All qualified applicants will receive equal consideration for employment and admission without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, veteran status, and parental status