



LIVE STOCK

companion

Volume 24: November 2025

MONTHLY TIP

Tis the season...

To Spray for Winter Weeds!

Late fall between Thanksgiving and Christmas is a great time to make herbicide applications to control cool-season weeds.

At this point in the year, cool-season weeds like Buttercup are small, so the herbicide is going to be more concentrated in the plant, resulting in better control.

We typically recommend a 2 to 3-day period with temperatures around 50-60 degrees Fahrenheit before making an application to ensure the plant is actively growing, so the herbicide can be absorbed and moved to its active site.

Typically, cool-season weed control is much easier in late fall when compared to winter or early spring when finding a dry period of adequate temperatures to get into the field.



Dr. Hannah Wright-Smith
UT Extension Weed Specialist



“Don’t wish for it, work for it!”

- Anonymous

FIBER FUELS THE RUMEN

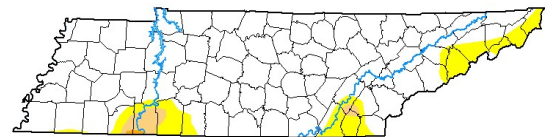
Dr. Katie Mason, UT Extension Beef Cattle Nutrition Specialist

One of the most fascinating things about cows is how they turn fiber into energy. Inside the rumen – a giant fermentation chamber – billions of microbes work to break down fibrous plants. As they do, they produce volatile fatty acids, which supply much of the cow’s energy. Fiber isn’t just filler; it is essential for keeping the rumen healthy. It gives those microbes something to work on and helps stimulate saliva production, which buffers the acidic rumen environment. When you look at a forage test, fiber shows up as neutral detergent fiber (NDF), acid detergent fiber (ADF), and lignin. NDF is especially important because it is tied to how much a cow will voluntarily eat. As NDF goes up, intake goes down, because high-fiber feeds take up more space in the rumen. A cow should eat about 2 to 2.5% of her body weight in dry matter per day. A simple rule of thumb for estimating intake is $120 \div \text{NDF} (\%)$. For example, hay testing at 68% NDF means the cow will likely eat only about 1.7% of her body weight in dry matter each day. Even with free-choice access, that physical limit can keep her from getting enough energy, so a supplement might be needed. Paying attention to fiber levels helps predict intake and make sure your herd’s energy needs are met, especially when relying on hay through the winter.

WEATHER

Dr. Bruno Pedreira, Director of the Beef & Forage Center

Due to the government shutdown, October 2025 temperature and rainfall data are unavailable. The 10-year averages are 60.9°F and 3.7 inches of precipitation, respectively. ncei.noaa.gov

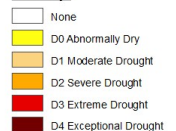


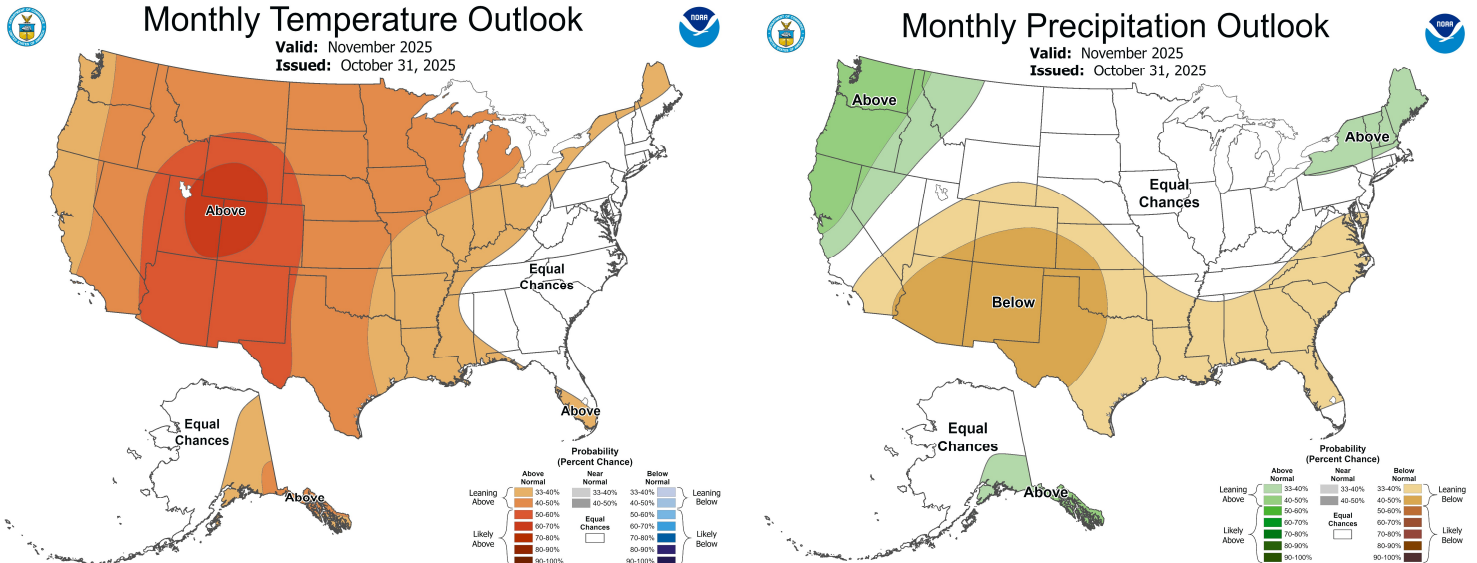
November is shaping up to bring mostly normal conditions across Tennessee. A few counties in the western part of the state may see slightly warmer temperatures than usual, while areas along the North Carolina and Georgia borders could have a bit less rainfall.

October’s rains arrived at just the right time, giving new seedlings a strong start and helping stockpiled pastures recover nicely. Overall, growing conditions look favorable heading into fall. Only about 11% of the state is experiencing any level of drought, which is a good sign for the months ahead.

droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Intensity:





THE SEEDS TELL THE STORY: WHY SAVING A SAMPLE MATTERS

Dr. Bruno Pedreira, Director of the Beef & Forage Center

November is typically when I start receiving calls about pasture renovation failures. Most of the time, the reason for poor germination comes down to one unpredictable factor: the weather. Sometimes, it's because the rain never made it to that pasture sown in September. Other times, a light shower may have been enough to start germination, but not enough to keep seedlings alive. And occasionally seeding happens too late, just before the first frost, which kills those young tillers. Whatever the case, weather is usually the main reason seedlings fail to establish. It's all part of the blessings (and curses) of farming! However, every year I also encounter two other common situations:

1. Everything was done right where the weather cooperated and management was sound, but germination still didn't happen as expected.
2. Unexpected plants appear, someone brings forage samples to a meeting in November, and it turns out the plants growing aren't what you paid for.

In both cases, there's not much that can be done *unless* you have saved a small sample of your seed at planting time. If you kept a few pounds of seed (from a few seed bags) in labeled Ziplock bags and stored it in a climate-controlled space (not in a barn with extreme temperatures), we can send that sample for a germination test or grow it in a greenhouse to confirm the seed variety. Mislabeling does happen, and sometimes germination can be reduced due to poor handling, transportation, or storage conditions but without a retained sample, it's almost impossible to verify what went wrong. So, next time you buy seed:

- Take pictures of the seed bag and label.
- Save two or three small Ziplock bags of seed.
- Store them in your house or office, where temperatures stay relatively constant.

Those simple steps can make a big difference in tracking seed lot issues and getting answers if your pasture renovation doesn't go as planned.

This and other useful information can be found at your local UT/TSU Extension office or on UTBEEF.COM.

UTBEEF & FORAGE CENTER

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

UTIA.TENNESSEE.EDU

Real. Life. Solutions.™

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Live.Stock** - Join us for our broadcast December 10th at 2 PM ET
- **AFGC 2026 Annual Conference** January 12-14th, Asheville, NC.

Details can be found on UTBEEF.COM



Photo of the Month by Dr. Bruno Pedreira:

After Hurricane Helene, many farmers have been working hard to restore their pastures. In Washington County, recovery has been especially challenging because of the heavy sand deposits left behind by the storm.