

Fowler Seed Marketing

Serving your Seed & Soil Fertility Needs Since 1995

Forages for Beef Stockers



Beef stockers are typically 4 to 500 pound weaned calves that are purchased or contracted for 6 to 8 months with the goal of maximizing inexpensive gain on forage before moving to a feedlot for finishing.



A reasonable goal is to average at least 1.75 pounds of gain per day at a cost of \$.75 per pound of gain or less. Fall calves are ready to be put on grass in April for fall delivery to the feedlot. Spring calves are usually weaned in the fall and put on crop residues planted with annual forages or stock-piled fescue. In areas where mud is a major issue, feeding stored feed in a dry lot may also be an option.

Compared to finishing cattle, stockers require a lower percentage of their consumed energy for maintenance, giving opportunity for faster gains with high-energy forage. conversely, these animals require a higher percentage of

consumed protein than older stock. Therefore, forages with a higher portion of legume are better suited to meeting the

Perennial pastures containing ryegrass, meadow fescue, soft-leaved tall fescue, alfalfa, trefoil, red clover, and white clover are generally well-suited for grazing stockers. **FSM Brand HQ-F, HQ-W and HQ-P** are different combinations of these species designed for specific soil and drainage conditions, but well suited for producing the nutritional quality needed by rapidly growing stockers.

In areas with unimproved fescue, grazing stockpiled legume-fescue pastures may provide adequate nutrition for good gains. In both cases, well fed pastures will have a higher nutritional level than ones poorly fed or fertilized with an imbalanced program. Our **Agri-Energy Bio-Enhanced Pasture Program** has been shown to increase season long yield and raise Relative Feed Quality by up to 50 points.

In any pasture system, planning for dry weather by planting enough summer annuals, like **FSM Brand Cow Candy II BMR** sorghum-sudan, to feed the stock for at least one month is wise preparation. In areas with higher land cost, annual forages are often used to feed more animals on less acreage.

FSM Brand

OPTimum II forage blend can be planted in early spring for late grazing.

It can be followed by **Cow Candy II** when soils reach 65 degrees F. **Cow Candy II** requires two-thirds less moisture than corn to produce a full yield and can be cost-effectively be planted alone or underseeded with **Barkant** turnips or **T-Raptor** rape through mid-July.



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These brassicas can also be planted with **FSM Brand Banquet** forage oats after wheat or other small grain has been harvested for mid to late fall grazing.

**FSM
Brand**

OPTimum

A high performing annual forage mix, OPTimum is a high yielding combination of tall, late maturing, wide leafed oats, similar maturity forage-type spring triticale, and tall, highly digestible forage peas.

Suited for spring or fall production, OPTimum can be used as a forage crop or a nurse crop for alfalfa seedlings. In the spring, seed as early as field conditions permit. For fall production, seed during August when adequate moisture exists for germination.

OPTimum performs well on a wide range of soils throughout Ohio with adequate drainage for timely planting and good water holding capacity through harvest.

Finally, several fall planted small grain forages can be used for light winter and early spring grazing followed by additional grazing or mechanical harvest. **Trical Brand Flex 719** triticale has the best forage quality profile and can be planted through September. **Aroostook** rye is the preferred grain rye for cover crop or forage use, especially when planting extends later than mid-October.

High quality annual forage that exceeds the daily intake needs for grazing can be harvested as balage for use during 'pasture outages'.

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Because pasture has about one-half the cost of production of hay or balage, it is most profitable to maximize the use of this animal harvested forage.

However, squeezing another day out of swards that are too short or too wet or too mature will reduce the season-long production and may seriously damage the stand.

Moving temporary fence often helps to maximize utilization and minimize waste. As with other pasture systems, plan ahead for weather contingencies with appropriate quality stored feed.

Beef stocker cattle provide excellent profit-opportunities when provided with appropriate quality grazed forages supplemented as needed with similar stored feed.



To learn more about to applying these principles on your farm, visit your local FSM dealer or call Kevin Fowler at **888.249.SEED**

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