Tall Fescue Pasture for Growing and Finishing Animals

A. E. SPOONER
Agronomy Department
University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, Arkansas

W. S. MC GUIRE
Crop Science Department
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon

Tall fescue (Festuca arundinacea Schreb.) is used throughout most of the United States as a source of feed for growing animals. Two systems of feeding are being used, backgrounding and finishing. Backgrounding, as used in this chapter, is defined as the period from weaning (around 200 kg) to the time the animal has reached an acceptable weight (around 340 kg) for finishing either in the feedlot or continued on pasture. Finishing, as used in this chapter, is defined as the period from backgrounding to the time the animal has reached an acceptable weight (410 to 475 kg) and grade (high good to low choice) for slaughter.

The discussion in this chapter will be limited to experiments where performance of the animal is the criteria for measuring production. Yields of herbage as affected by different cultural and management practices are discussed in detail in Chapters 4, 9, and 10. The two systems of management on tall fescue (backgrounding and finishing) will be discussed separately.

BACKGROUNDING

A. Tall Fescue

Tall fescue has been evaluated to a limited extent for growing or backgrounding beef animals. A large portion of the research work has compared tall fescue with other species.

The effects of N rates applied to tall fescue and orchardgrass (Dactylis glomerata L.) on the average daily gains, animals/ha, and beef produced/ha were evaluated by Peterson et al. (1962) in Indiana (Table 12-1). The highest average daily gain was obtained from the orchardgrass. Daily gains decreased as N rates were increased. The number of animals/ha was greatest for the tall fescue and animals/ha increased with each increase...