Pasture Clipping and Management

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As the grazing season progresses producers should consider mowing pastures to a uniform height after grazing to encourage vegetative pasture growth and eliminate forage seed heads. Vegetative pastures are more productive throughout the grazing season due to greater leaf area and reduced shading. Forage seed heads should be eliminated for two reasons, they contain the largest concentration of the toxic endophyte found in Kentucky-31 Tall Fescue and they are a source of eye irritation contributing to pinkeye.

For optimum forage consumption and pasture health cattle should be turned into pastures at a height of 8-10 inches and removed when the stubble is 4 inches. For those of you who don't carry a yardstick around, each cow comes equipped with a grazing stick. The optimal “graze zone” is between the cow’s eye and nostril, if the forage is above the eye animals spend excessive time selectively grazing, conversely if the cow’s nostril is visible when grazing, forage intake is reduced and excessive leaf area has been removed resulting in slow pasture regrowth.

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