

A photograph of a brown cow grazing in a lush green field. The cow is in the foreground, facing right, with its head down. In the background, another cow is visible, and the sky is a clear, bright blue. The image is framed by a white horizontal band across the middle, which contains the title and author information.

The Growth of Grazing in the South

Joe Horner



Why Did DFA Create Dairy Grazing Services?

To assist members who are seeking help in creating a more viable production system for their dairy farm

- On-Farm Consulting
- Grazing Products
- Building a Stronger U.S. Dairy Grazing Culture

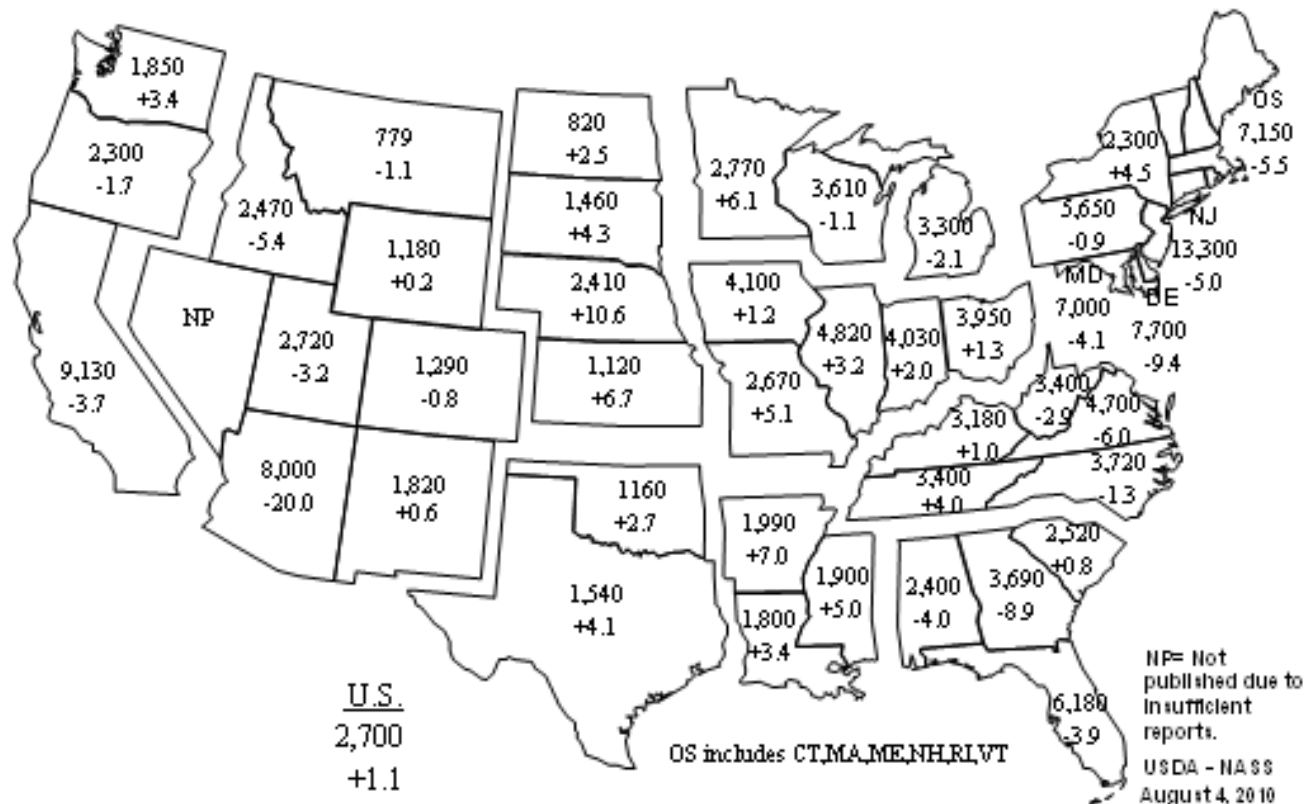


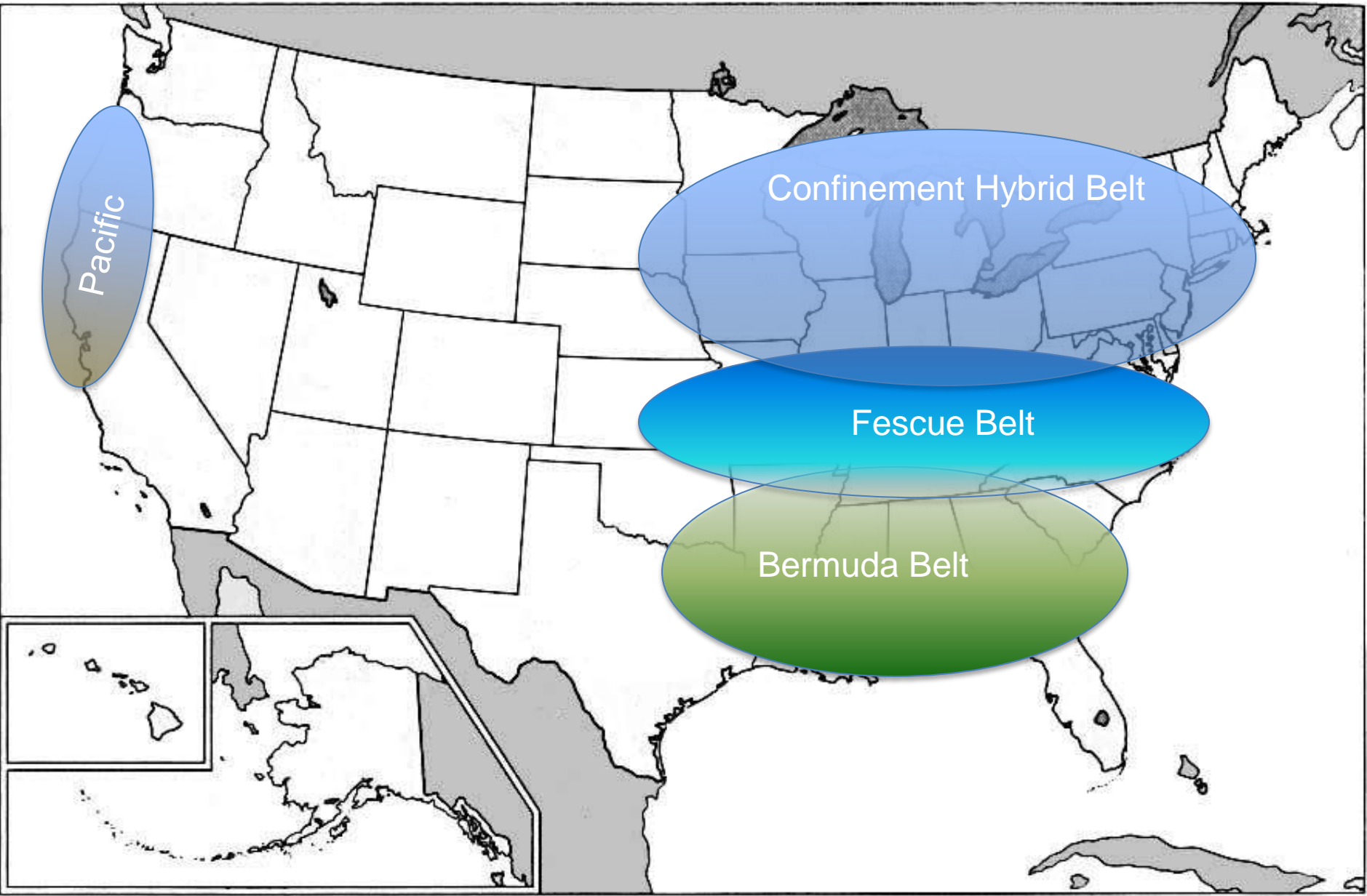
Will Grazing Dairies Continue to Grow?

- Are higher feed costs here to stay?
- Are higher energy costs here to stay?
- Will environmental compliance costs and restrictions be an increasing concern for conventional dairies?
- Are dairy prices around the world coming together?
- Is the next generation attracted to a grazing dairy lifestyle?
- Can a grazing dairy be profitable and attract financing?

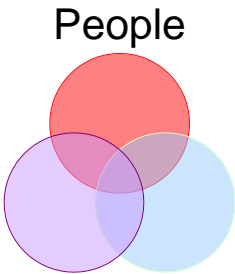


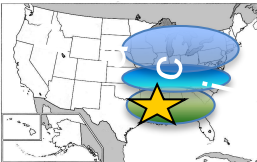
Where Will Grazing Dairies Grow?

2010 Cropland Value by State
Dollars per Acre and Percent Change from 2009



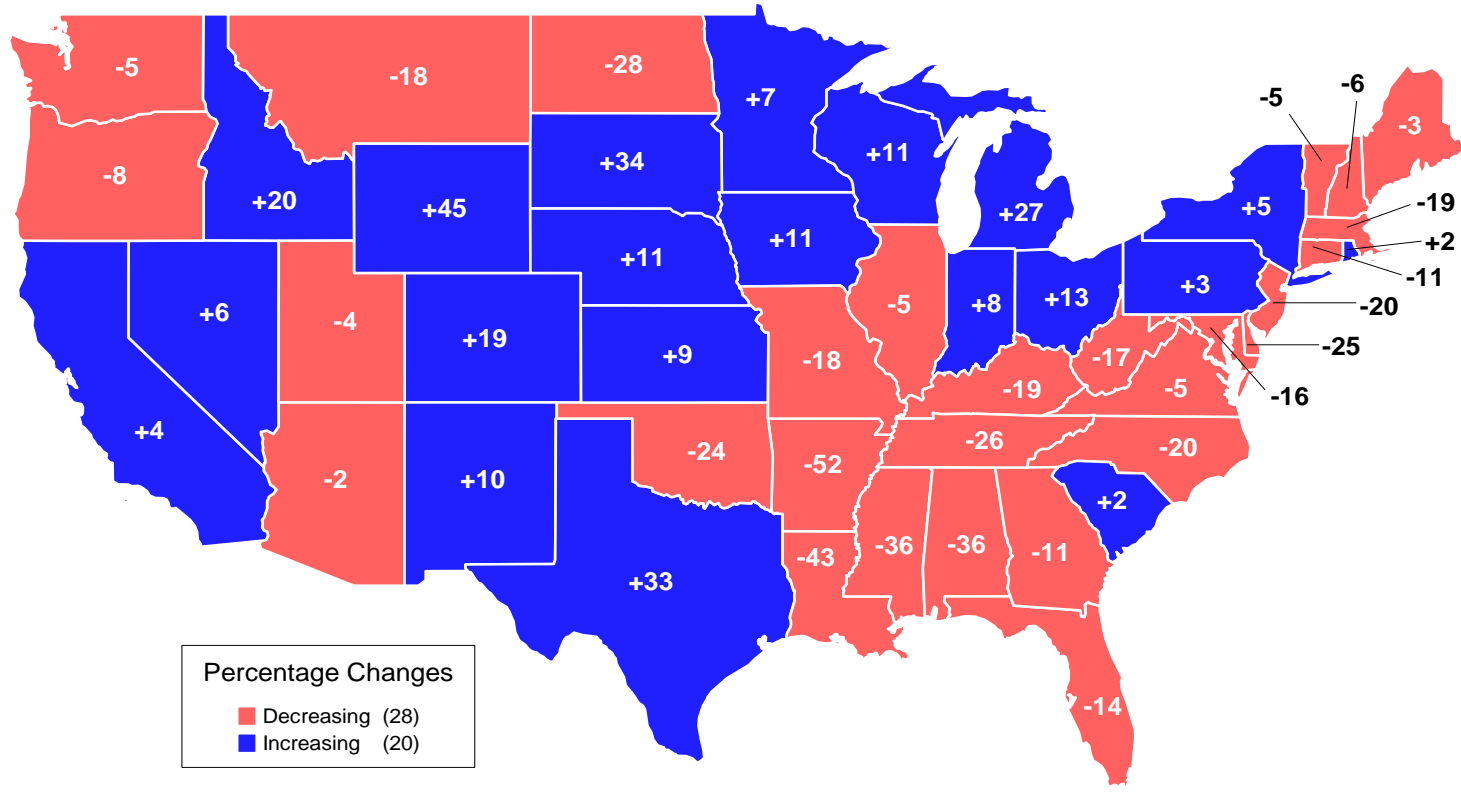


Where Will Grazing Dairies Grow?

	Existing dairies converting		New grazing dairies to be built	
	Defense Preserve the family farm	Offense Repurpose older non-grazing dairies	Locals	New Entrants
Hybrid Belt 	1,000s of potential converts	Opportunity for next generation	New dairy for next generation	Lifestyle & value driven
Fescue Belt 	Fewer remaining	Resurrection dairy – great entry point	Next dairy for early adopters	Relocating Producers
Bermuda Belt 	Fewest remaining	Depends upon irrigation	Next dairy for early adopters	Biggest scale & profit opportunity

Where Will Grazing Dairies Grow?

Percent Change In Per Capita Milk Production
2009 vs 2004

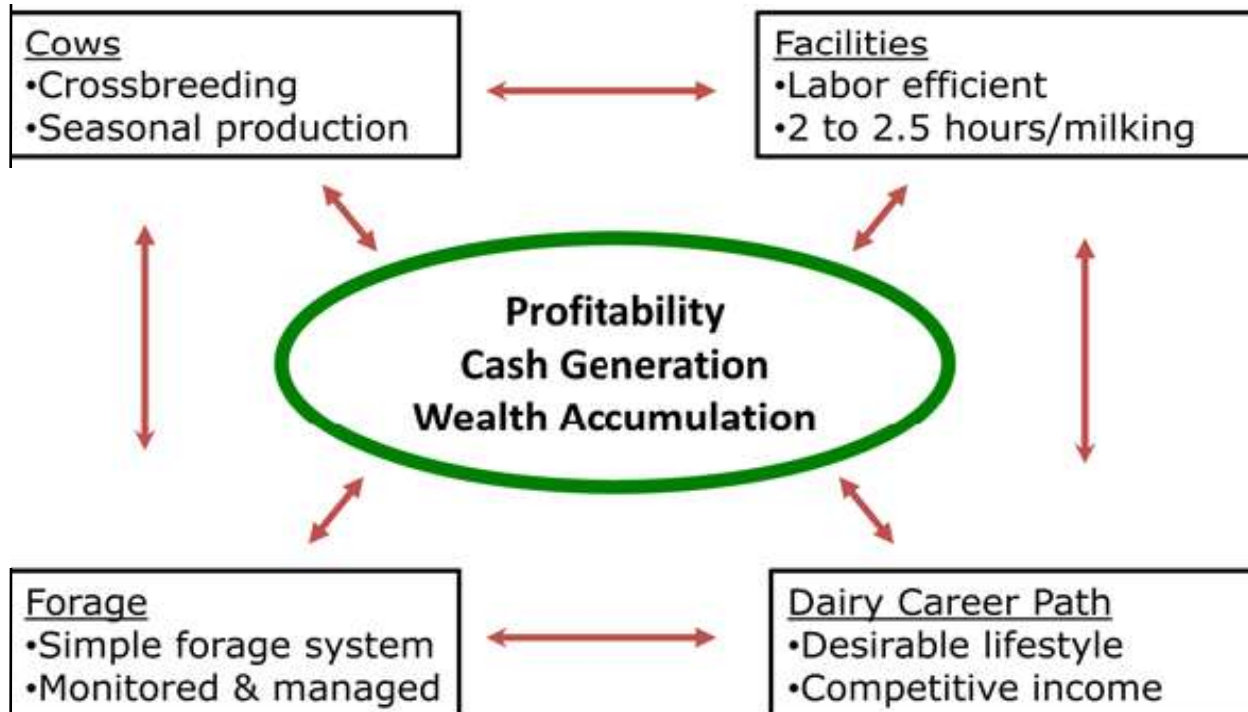






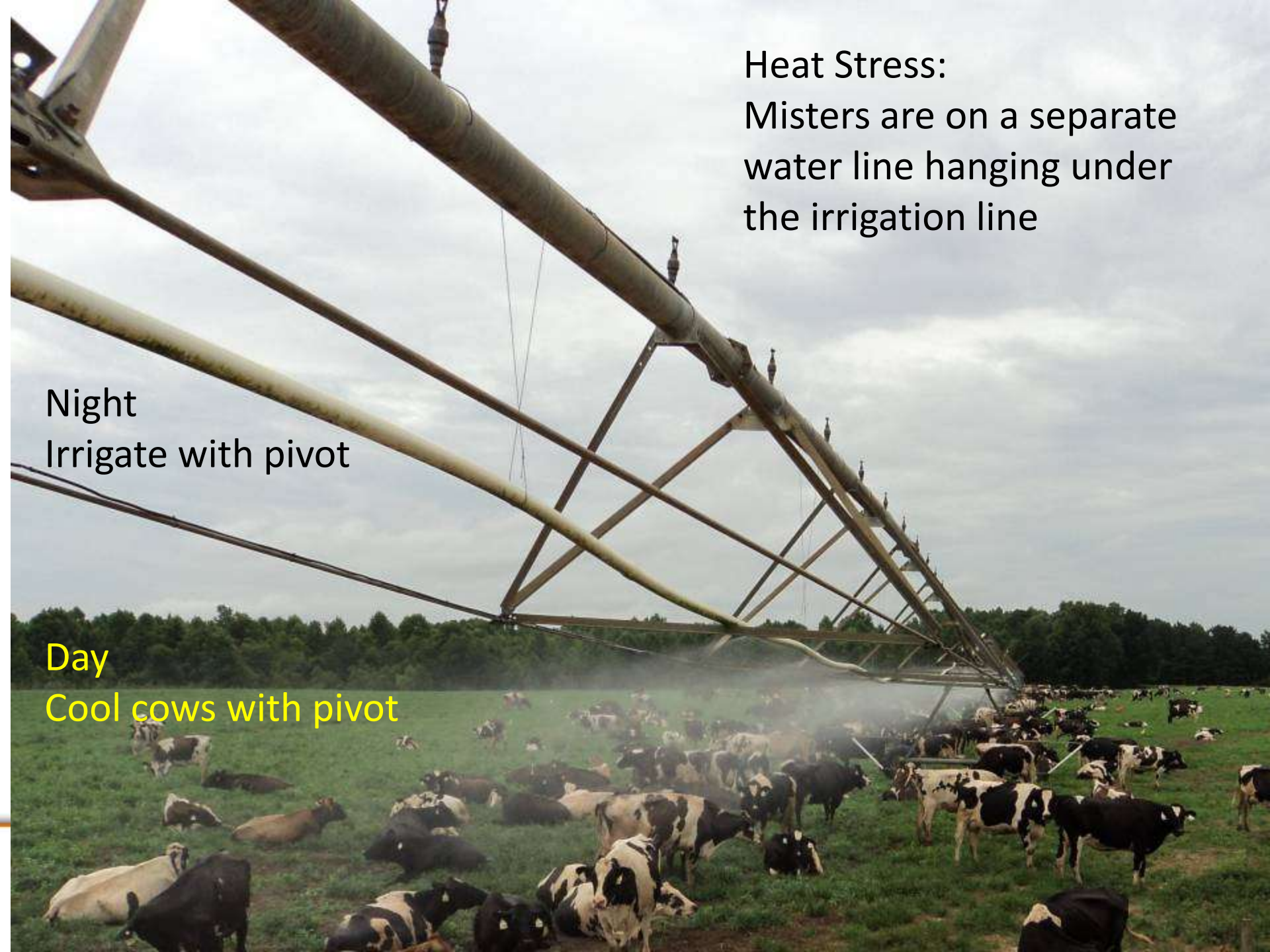


Dairy Grazing Systems versus Traditional Grazing



How Will Southern Grazing Dairies Appear?





Heat Stress:
Misters are on a separate
water line hanging under
the irrigation line

Night
Irrigate with pivot

Day
Cool cows with pivot

Facilities allow Flexibility

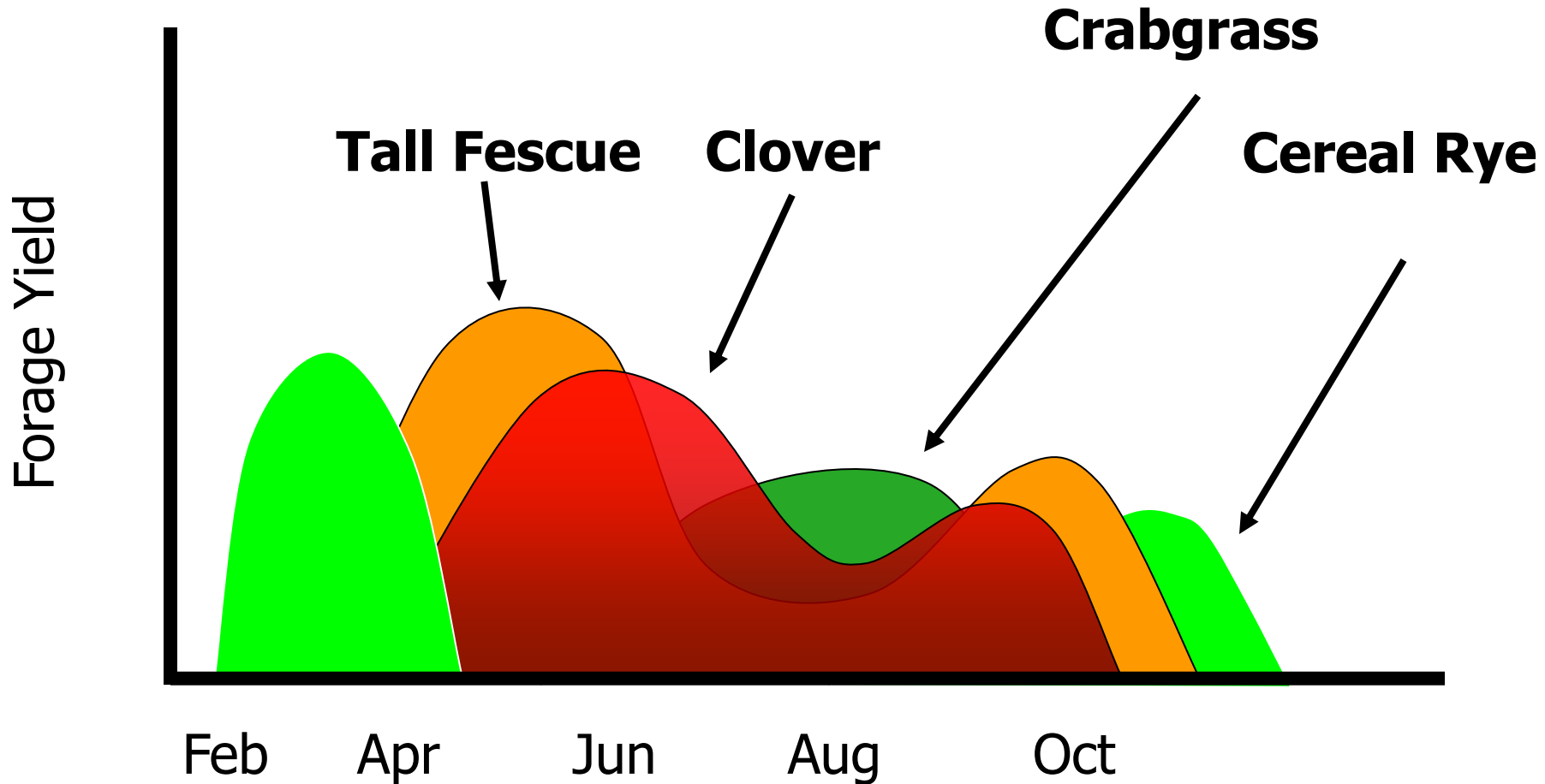


Lanes:

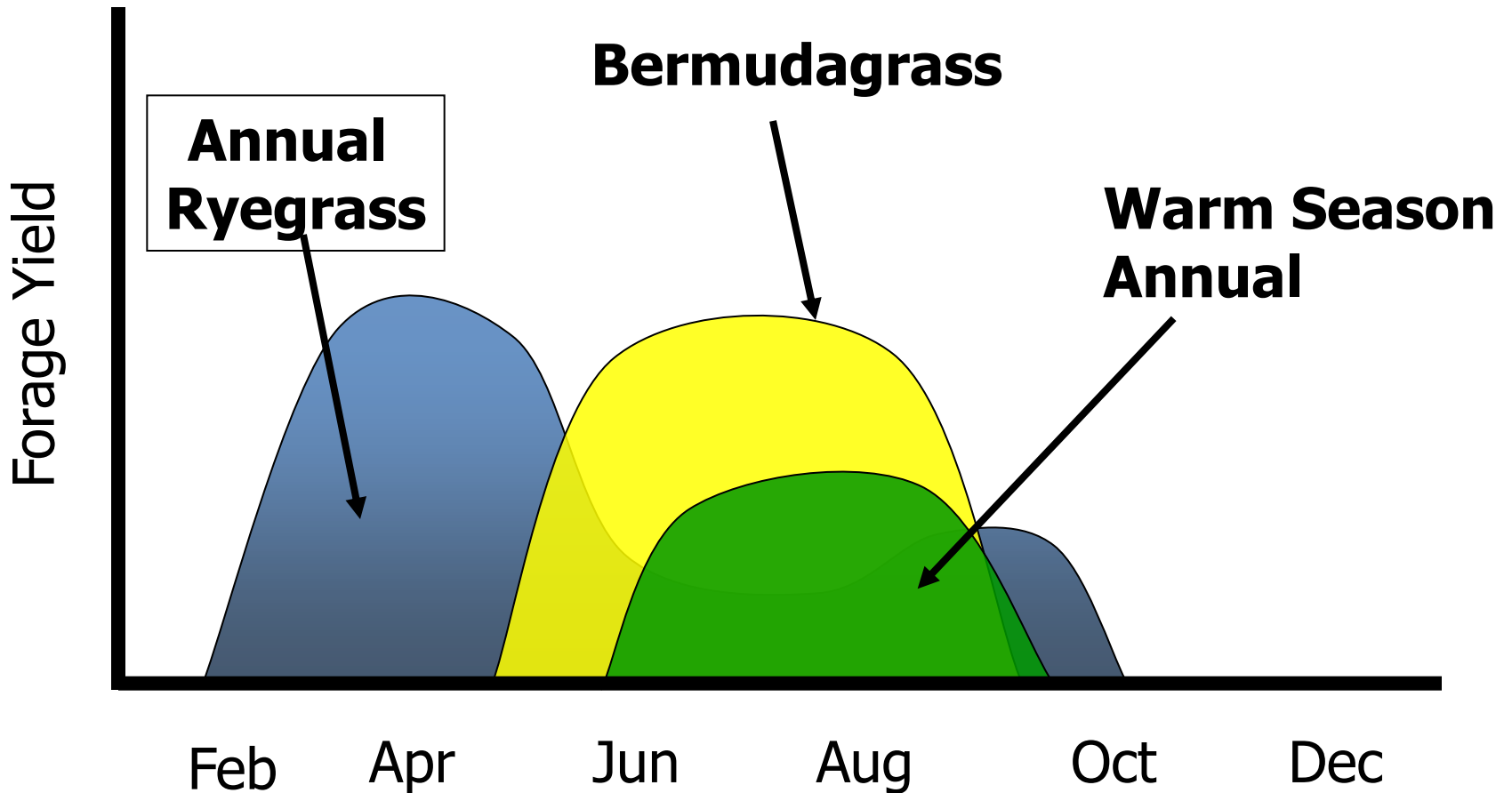
- Graded with road grader
- Hauled in clay for filling low spots
- Used culverts over drains



Fescue Belt



Bermudagrass Belt





Tifton 85
Bermudagrass

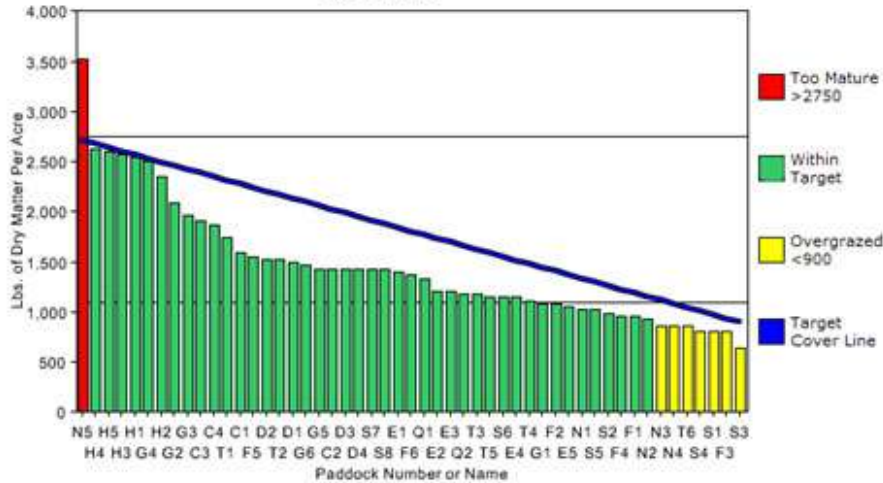
Learning to Use Tools to:
Measure, monitor and manage the grazing wedge



Forage

- Simple forage system
- Monitored & managed

Grazing Wedge
McQuiddy Dairy
04/21/2007



Summary of KEY INDICATORS for Grazing Management and Animal Performance		
Estimated Growth Rate (lbs of dry matter accumulation per acre per day)	63	
Cover when cows turned onto a paddock (lbs DM/Acre)	Actual: 3518	Ideal: 2750
Cover when cows removed from paddock (lbs DM/Acre)	Actual: 642	Ideal: 900
Average Pasture Cover (lbs DM/Acre)	Actual: 1456	Ideal: 1825
Rotation length current (days till cows return to given paddock)	30	
Milk production (lbs per day)	53	
Lbs of hay for milking herd currently being fed (per cow per day)	0	
Lbs of grain for milking herd currently being fed (per cow per day)	14	
Lbs of hay for dry cows currently being fed (per cow per day)	0	
Lbs of grain for dry cows currently being fed (per cow per day)	0	
Critical issues right now: Increased grain and started rationing grass with frequent moves and requiring low residuals. Milk down about 5 lbs but not having to clip or use follower herd is nice. The paddocks that were grazed during the freeze have been slow recovering. The bottom 5 paddocks on the chart were all grazed over 2 weeks ago.		

Provides:

- Daily forage growth rate
- Forage available on farm for grazing
- Real-time feedback on grazing management

Helps producers manage:

- Pasture rotation
- Hay or silage making operations
- Supplemental feed
- Fertilizer

Secrets of Success

- Keep the cows on pasture as much as possible
- Stay focused on profit rather than falling into the trap of top production per cow
- Keep investment focused first in cattle, then land and last into machinery and buildings
- Avoid machinery purchases by hiring contractors

Making Hybrid Systems Work

- Keep the system simple
- Keep the focus on cows
- Manage the cattle as large mobs
- Must have a high throughput parlor





Research Needed

Seasonal Forage System Guides

Establishing key points for creating and managing a feed wedge			
	Pregrazing Level	Post Grazing Residual	Growth Rate
Coastal Bermuda	6" to 10"	3" early season 5" late season	60 to 80 pounds per day
Tifton 85	8" to 16"	3" early season 8" late season	75 to 110 pounds per day
Bahiagrass – Improved Pensacola varieties	6" to 8"	2.5" early seasons 3" to 4" late season	50 to 65 pounds per day

Source: Dr. Dennis Hancock, UGA

Questions?

