



## **Potential of Warm Season Grasses as Forages in the Northeast**

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Forage production in the northeastern United States is based on cool season grasses with peak production in the spring and a secondary peak in the fall. Their growth characteristic limit grazing opportunities and have developed a livestock feeding system dependent on hay during the summer. This system presents a high workload for haymaking in the spring and hauling the hay to the livestock in the summer. Cool season grasses are only marginally adapted to much of the northeast where shallow shaly soil predominates and limits fertility and moisture holding capacity.

Warm season grasses have the potential to even out the distribution of forage for grazing throughout the growing season. The improved distribution allows the livestock to harvest high quality forage reducing the demand for hay harvest and hauling. Warm season grasses are also better adapted to the shallow shaly soils and produce quality forage on land previously unproductive. Switchgrass and big bluestem have cultivars adapted to the northeast.

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