

# Forage Research Updates

*Adapted by Paul Peterson, University of Minnesota Extension*

## **WISCONSIN - Management-Intensive Grazing Boosts Yield and Quality in Wisconsin Study**

**M**anagement-intensive rotational grazing (MIRG) is used by many farmers seeking to balance profitability, environmental stewardship, and quality of life. Productivity of pastures in much of the Upper Midwest is limited to April through October, so promoting high quality forage production during the grazing season and for winter storage is critical to dairy and beef farm profitability.

An experiment was conducted on pastures in south-central Wisconsin dominated by Kentucky bluegrass, orchardgrass, meadow fescue, perennial ryegrass, and white clover, to compare MIRG, continuous grazing, haymaking, and unmanaged land. Rotational paddocks were grazed by cow-calf pairs monthly for approximately two days and then allowed to rest for approximately 28 days. Plots designated for haymaking were harvested two times per growing season.

Forage available and relative forage quality (RFQ) were greater under MIRG compared to the other treatments. However, root production in the upper 6" of soil was less under both grazing treatments compared to the unmanaged, unharvested treatment.

### **Reference**

L. Oates, D. Undersander, C. Gratton, M. Bell, and R. Jackson. 2011. Management-intensive rotational grazing enhances forage production and quality of subhumid cool-season pastures. *Crop Sci.* 51:892-901.