

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Forage Recovery – Video Summary

Even before last week's winter moisture, greenup of cool season forages (brome/fescue) had begun. As C3 grasses, they thrive in temperatures in the 45 to 75-degree F range – meaning they are going to really take off as moisture gets in to the soil profile and temperatures increase.

I've talked a lot this winter about what to expect for recovery of brome damaged by armyworms last fall. Unfortunately, what we *actually* see will be all over the board. To help explain what that might look like, check out a video recently posted on our Meadowlark Extension District website at: <https://www.meadowlark.k-state.edu/crops-soils/index.html> (under Informational Videos). It provides side by side stand comparisons from four different sites comparing damaged to undamaged areas of the same field. Just like what we expect to see as we proceed through spring, some sites show some decent recovery – while others show very little. Other resources accompany the video as well to provide additional information about what to expect as we head in to the growing season.

While armyworm feeding certainly played a big role in the damage seen to stands last fall, multiple factors – most notably dry post-harvest weather – played a role as well. Start evaluating stands now in case planning for offsetting lost forage production needs to start sooner than later.

Pruning Back Ornamental Grasses

Ornamental grasses are used on an increasing basis in many landscape plantings. While fairly *low* maintenance, they aren't *no* maintenance, and that means removing dead foliage before spring growth starts. Now is the time to do so.

When dead foliage is removed, ornamental grasses tend to not only be more attractive, but green up earlier as well. Depending on the species, you might be fine using hand clippers or even a weed whip. Larger species will likely require a chainsaw or other cutting tool to prune. When pruning, tie the top together to make it easier to cut and remove.

Some people prefer burning, but it must be done with *extreme* caution. The grass burns very hot, and damage to nearby structures is possible. Particularly this year, potential wildfires are also an issue. Only burn if it is safe and legal to do so.

If the center is blank, try dividing. Dig up the entire clump, separate, and replant the vigorous growth around the outer edge.