Forages are plants and plant parts, other than separated grains, which livestock eat.

Forages can be consumed straight from the pasture or harvested and stored as hay or silage (fermented plant material).

Over 4 million acres are devoted to forage production in Alabama. This is the second-highest commercial land use of a commodity in Alabama, trailing only forestry.

Alabama farmers harvested 810,000 acres of hay in 2016.

The Alabama hay crop was valued at $2.26 million in 2016.

Forageland acreage in Alabama exceeds acreage of all other crops combined.

Tall fescue, Bermudagrass, bahiagrass, dallisgrass, white clover, ryegrass, rye, wheat and oats are some of the most popular forages grown in Alabama.

On average, forages comprise 84 percent of beef cattle feed consumption.

Forage crops provide nutrients for many wildlife species.

Forage crops are an important source of pollen and nectar for honeybees.

Forage crops are one of the most effective erosion-preventing groundcovers and help protect water quality.

Forage crops are often planted in rotation with row crops such as cotton or peanuts to replenish soil nutrients.

One acre of forages protects 2 million pounds of soil.

Over 40 non-native forage crops are commonly planted in Alabama.

The forage-based livestock industry contributes more than $60 billion to the U.S. economy annually.

The U.S. hay crop is valued at $11 billion, making it the third most valuable crop in the U.S. after corn and soybeans.

Begin grazing tall fescue pastures at a target height of 4-8 inches, and end at a height of 2-3 inches. For bahiagrass, begin grazing at 6-10 inches and end at 1-2 inches. For white clover, begin grazing at 6-8 inches and end at 1-3 inches.

Sources:
AFGC.org
Encyclopediaofalabama.org
GeorgiaForages.com
USDA.org

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HAY & FORAGE GROWERS
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