

DETERMINING THE EFFECTS OF PLANTING DATE AND LAND PREPARATION METHOD ON THE FORAGE YIELD AND QUALITY OF FORAGE BRASSICA

Taylor Denman¹, Dennis Hancock², and J. D. Hale³

Forage-based livestock producers in the Southeastern US have a competitive advantage in the industry because warm summers and mild winters allow for an extended growing season compared to other parts of the US; however, there is still a gap from October through December, when few forages grow. Forage brassicas are rapidly establishing cool season crops that are used commonly as a forage in New Zealand. It is hypothesized that these characteristics could potentially fill the forage gap in October through November in Georgia where winters are mild however, there is little information on basic agronomic practices such as planting date and land preparation method on the forage yield and quality of forage brassica, especially when grown in Georgia. The purpose of this experiment is to evaluate the effect of land preparation method (Conventional till, No till – physical burning, No till – with mowing, and No till – no residue removal) and planting dates (September 1st, September 15th, October 1st, and October 15th) on the forage yield and quality of forage brassica when grown in Georgia. Results indicated that earlier planting dates (September 1st and September 15th) produced significantly higher forage yields than later planting dates (October 1st and October 15th) in addition, Planting into as little residue as possible (Conventional till and No till – with physical burning) produced significantly higher forage yields than treatments with more residue remaining (No till – with mowing and No till without residue removal). The nutrient quality of brassica was observed to be sufficient for livestock with high nutrient demands.

¹Graduate Student/Program Coordinator, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; ²Professor and Forage Extension Specialist, University of Georgia, Athens, GA, ³Research Technician, University of Georgia, Athens, GA.