

What's your alternative?



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It might seem a little odd to have an issue focused on forages to have only a handful of stories featuring the green stuff in our pastures. But, when you think about it, how appropriate for a year in which grass and hay have been limited for many.

Yes, some areas that had been in drought recovered a little — and some a lot — in 2023, but others were hit harder. Most have been forced to look at ways to utilize existing resources better,

to become more efficient and to find alternatives.

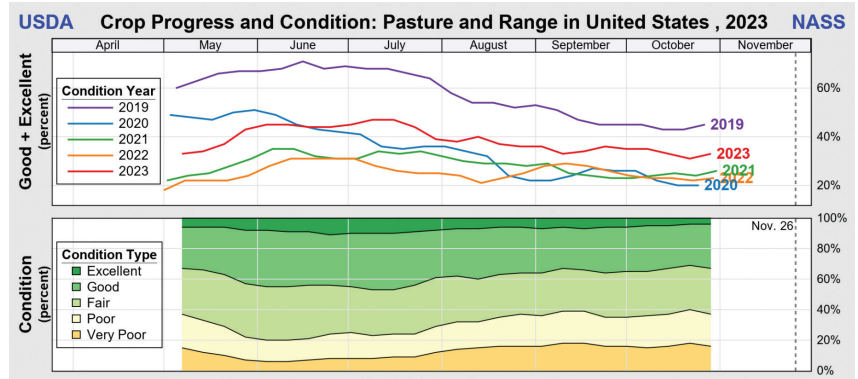
“Hay production was much higher in 2023, but still was among the lowest in the last 50 years,” said Len Steiner of Steiner Consulting Group, summarizing the Jan. 16 *Daily Livestock Report* published on the heels of the release of the *January Crop Production* reports by USDA’s National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). “Yields continued to see declines even though a lot of states saw significant drought recovery.”

NASS reports pasture and range conditions as a whole improved in 2023 (see Fig. 1), but cow states like Missouri were hit hard, with less than 20% of pasture and range in the “Good + Excellent” category for two years straight. You can find the report for your state at <https://bit.ly/NASSCropCharts>. Click on your state, then scroll down to the pasture and range chart.

Out of necessity

To illustrate the point that necessity fosters efficiency and

Fig. 1: Crop condition: pasture and range in the United States, 2023



SOURCE: National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS), Crop Progress Report.

innovation, Purina’s Rod Nulik used our oral hygiene habits — specifically, how we approach using a tube of toothpaste. When just opened, we have a whole tube. We really aren’t that concerned about how much is left, and we put a lot on the brush. But when it comes down to the end of the tube, we get a little conservative and a whole lot creative as to how to use the very last portions of toothpaste.

That time of need is when we come up with the breakthroughs that take us to the next level of efficiency. Consider the effect if we had applied that mindset in the time of scarcity to the whole tube.

We hope you enjoy this issue that looks at forages and their alternatives, as well as some technologies that might help us get better use out of what we have available in times of need. **ABB**

Editor’s note: The *Daily Livestock Report* referenced can be found at <https://dailylivestockreport.com>, along with past issues and a means to subscribe.

