Yield Potential of Emergency Forage Crop Options for the North Central USA
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RATIONALE & OBJECTIVE
Alfalfa winterkill and wet springs that delay planting often create a need for emergency forage crops in the North Central USA. Comprehensive comparisons of crop options are lacking.

We compared the emergency forage yield potential of different cool- and warm-season annual crop options as influenced by spring-summer planting date.

RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS
- Corn for silage was usually among the highest yielding options for all planting dates and environments.
- One-cut BMR forage sorghum at times produced the highest DM yields of all options, but was inconsistent and often failed to reach the target harvest maturity and moisture.
- Sorghum-sudan, sudangrass, and pearl millet produced good total season yields from 3 harvests for early May planting, and from 1 to 2 harvests for July 1 planting; their total season DM yields occasionally matched those for corn.
- Small grains with or without pea produced low yields when planted July 1.
- Fossil millets harvested once at late boot to early heading produced consistently good stands and yields within 60 days after planting.
- Soybean produced forage yields similar to fossil millets, but required more days.

The optimum crop to plant for emergency forage varies with when and how it will be utilized, the forage quality needed, and seed availability and cost.

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