



# Kentucky Deer School Project

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## Introduction

There is a limited amount of credible information and data available to landowners, farmers and property managers in Kentucky that addresses wildlife habitat management and specifically food plots. Many clientele seek information from the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service to improve their woodlands and wildlife habitat. Increased information in these areas will result in an overall improvement in deer herd health and overall satisfaction of the hunters. Therefore, the habitat will be better suited to produce trophy whitetails, increase hunter success, maximize landowner revenue through hunt leasing and provide overall positive economic impacts throughout the state.

## Purpose

- Determine desired forage species utilized by white-tailed deer during specific times of the year.
- Provide research based information regarding food plots to clientele.

## Results Cont.

- September-October Crimson Clover proved to be the most sought after forage variety in the research plot.
- November all forage varieties were consistent.
- December-January Purple Top Turnips outlasted all other forage varieties and were consistently better than 7 Top Turnips.
- Chicory proved to be the most consistent forage throughout the 5 month research period.
- Winter Peas, Chicory & Purple Top Turnips were the top 3 performers throughout.

## Conclusions

- According to our research a good mix of forage species for a fall food source would include Crimson Clover, Winter Peas, Purple Top Turnips and Chicory.
- Crimson Clover pictures/grazing pressure tripled the next closest forage species in the month of October. For early season hunters, this would be the best option out of the other 5 forages in the trials.
- In the months of November and December, most forages were relatively close in grazing pressure and number of game photos. This is likely due to a decreased desire to feed during the breeding season.
- The best option for late season foraging is Purple Top Turnips. However, the Chicory and Winter Peas were not far behind in grazing pressure and game photos during the same time period.



## Materials & Methods

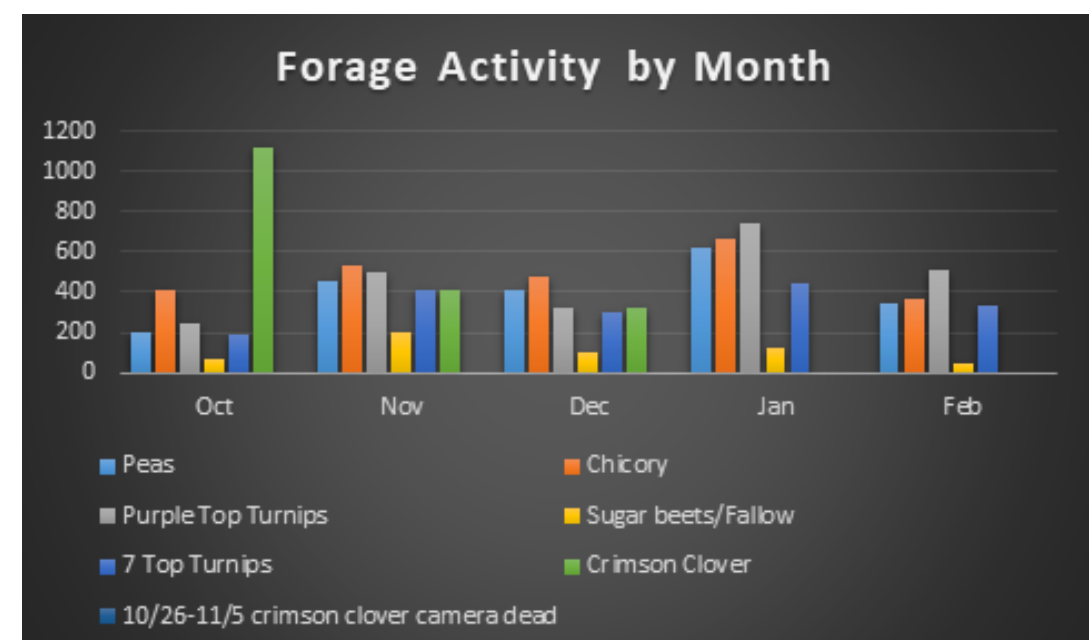
- Soil sampled plot area
- Used ATV and small equipment to prepare the plots
- 1 acre total plot size
- Planted 6 different annual forages in single species blocks
- Utilized exclusion cages in each section
- Game camera surveillance in each section
- Perimeter poly fence
- Planting date: September 9th
- Nutritional analysis: November 8th
- Game cameras pulled in February for date recording

## Results

- Winter Peas
- TDN %..... N/A
- CP %..... N/A
- Sugar Beets
- TDN %..... 73
- CP %..... 20.6
- 7 Top Turnips
- TDN %..... 77
- CP %..... 21.7

- Chicory
- TDN %..... 61
- CP %..... 13.9
- Purple Top Turnips
- TDN %..... 75
- CP %..... 13.1
- Crimson Clover
- TDN %..... 61
- CP %..... 13.2

Forage Activity by Month



Forage Activity by Month

