

## **PROFITABILITY OF PRODUCTION SYSTEMS WITH COTTON AND PEANUTS INCORPORATING WINTER ANNUAL GRAZING**

Manik Anand<sup>1\*</sup>, Jason Bergtold<sup>2</sup>, Guillermo Siri-Prieto<sup>3</sup>, D. Wayne Reeves<sup>4</sup>, Randy L. Raper<sup>2</sup>  
and Trent Morton<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, 202 Comer Hall, Auburn University, Auburn, AL 36849-5406

<sup>2</sup>Soil Dynamics Research Unit, USDA-ARS, 411 S. Donahue, Auburn, AL 36832

<sup>3</sup>Ing. Agr.(PhD), Producción Vegetal, Facultad de Agronomía, Ruta 3 Km. 363, Paysandu, Uruguay.

<sup>4</sup>J. Philip Campbell, Sr. Natural Resource Conservation Center, USDA-ARS, 1420 Experiment Station Road, Watkinsville, GA 30677

\*Corresponding author's e-mail address: anandm1@auburn.edu

### **ABSTRACT**

The use of contracts in livestock production has been widespread since at least the 1950s. Under grazing contracts, cattle owners usually place stocker cattle on pasture owned or leased by a caretaker (e.g. farmer or landowner). It can provide farmers an increase in revenue by utilizing winter cover crops (such as oats and rye) as forages. As crop input costs rise, partially due to higher fuel prices, additional income from diversified sources, such as winter annual grazing, may be of greater importance for profitability of the farming operation. Furthermore, as the cost of planting cover crops in conservation tillage systems increases due to higher input costs, winter annual grazing may provide a means for offsetting that cost, while still maintaining some of the benefit of the cover crop. The purpose of this study is to examine the profitability of integrating winter annual grazing into cotton-peanut cropping systems under different tillage practices and types of forage or cover. Data were obtained from a 3-year field study conducted by Siri-Prieto (2004) initiated in October 2000 at the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station's Wiregrass Research and Extension Center in the Coastal Plain of southeastern Alabama. Findings suggest that winter annual grazing can be a profitable enterprise, supplementing farmers' income when input costs increase. Furthermore, conservation systems using in-row subsoiling, such as strip-till and para-till, provided the highest return when coupled with winter annual grazing, while strict no-till tended to provide the lowest returns.