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UK Forage News

Keeping Forage-Livestock producers in Kentucky informed

Dr. S. Ray Smith and Krista Lea, MS.~ Editors

October 2017

What Eats Problem Weeds?

Pasture systems are prone to infestation with problem weeds. High traffic areas, overgrazing and lack of proper weed control contribute to this problem. Sheep and goats may be able to help keep some of these problem weeds in check, even if they will not eliminate them. A small herd of sheep and goats in Clay County Kentucky were recently observed grazing a vegetative tall fescue pasture with scattered problem weeds like ironweed, cocklebur and pigweed. The sheep and goats had grazed the ends of the tall fescue leaves, which were elongated with new fall growth. However, they had clearly defoliated the ironweed, and were observed to consume mature pigweed and cocklebur. Grazing will almost never eliminate problem weeds, but co-grazing with other species, especially goats, may help to slow their proliferation. ~ Dr. Jimmy Henning



Goat grazing tall ironweed. Photo: Dr. Jimmy Henning

Register now for the KY Grazing Conference: Pasture Management to Control Weeds and Improve Production

The 2017 Kentucky Grazing Conference will focus on pasture management to control weeds and improve pasture production and will be held: October 17th in Lexington and October 18th in Hopkinsville. The Keynote speaker is Kathy Voth, who has presented nationally on using grazing to control weeds and is a founding partner and editor of the popular online newsletter "On Pasture."

Other speakers will discuss management and chemical options to control weeds including: Dr. Chris Teutsch, UK; Dr. Scott Flynn, DOW; Dr. Greg Brann, NRCS; Dr. Michael Flessner, VT; and Bill Payne, retired

dairyman. The popular KFGC Forage Spokesperson contest will be held at the Lexington location. Early registration is \$40 and ends October 4 or you may choose the value option of conference registration plus a one year KFGC membership for \$50. KY Forage and Grassland Council membership is normally \$25. Go to the UK forage website and click on "Grazing Conference Tab" to register (www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage) or for full program. Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

Many Weeds Can be Controlled with Fall Spraying

Many problem weeds like poison hemlock, plantain, and biennial thistles can be controlled with late fall applications of recommended herbicides. University of Kentucky weed scientists have developed an excellent publication that helps to identify weeds, tells when to spray, and what herbicides are most effective. Go to the forage section of the UK Weed Science website:

<http://weedscience.ca.uky.edu/forages> and download "Broadleaf Weeds of Kentucky Pastures" (AGR-207). This website also contains other publications and resources for recommended weed control. If you plan to frost seed clover in February make sure to use a herbicide with a low carryover. The herbicide label for each product clearly explains the waiting period before you can seed clover.

Eastern KY Hay Contest Update

The annual East Kentucky Hay Contest had a record number of entries this year. Over 415 samples were submitted from 12 eastern Kentucky counties for nutritive analysis. UK's Agriculture and Natural Resource Agents in Districts 1 and 2 worked with their local hay producers to secure the samples. The agents gathered the samples then forwarded them to the University's Robinson Center for Appalachian Resource Sustainability (RCARS). Once there, staff from RCARS and personnel from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Hay and Forage Testing Program sorted, dried, ground and analyzed the samples for the farmers.

The results and an overview of the samples received were announced at the recently concluded East Kentucky Hay School at the RCARS facility.

This contest now gives many eastern Kentucky producers a substantial tool to formulate rations for their livestock enterprises for the upcoming winter. Rather than just "guess" at what the quality of their hay is... they now know and can work with their local county agents,

nutritionists, feed stores or veterinarians (in preparing those rations) to ensure their livestock are getting the necessary energy and protein necessary to carry them through the feeding season. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture has supported this project for many years and without their help, the contest could not be held. Make sure to contact the KDA Forage Testing Program (502-782-9210 or your local county agent if you want your hay tested. ~Tom Keene

Featured Pub: Managing Small Grains for Livestock Forage (AGR-160)

Small grains like wheat are grown predominately as a grain crop in Kentucky. Managed properly, wheat and small grains (rye, oat, barley and triticale) are multipurpose crops that can also be used for grazing, silage, and hay production. The most widely planted small grain solely for grazing is cereal rye with its vigorous fall growth and early spring production. All small grains can be used as winter cover crops for soil erosion control and as scavengers of residual fertilizer N following heavily fertilized summer annuals. The full publication can be found online at www.uky.edu/ag/forage under the publication section. For information on the best adapted small grain varieties refer to “2016 Annual Grass Report” PR-719 under the Forage Variety Trials link on the UK Forage Website.

Stockpiled Tall Fescue: Getting the Most Out of It

Once pastures have been stockpiled for late fall/winter grazing, how they are utilized can dramatically impact grazing days per acre. Research in Missouri showed that giving cows access to only enough forage for 3-days versus 14-days resulted in a 40% increase in grazing days per acre. In a dry year, this could mean the difference buying hay when prices are high or making it through with what you already have. The following tips will help to get the most of your stockpiled forages.

Graze pastures that contain warm-season grasses first. Although we often like to think of pastures as monocultures, they are often complex mixtures of cool-



It is ok to make your cows work! In this photo strip grazing stockpiled tall fescue drastically improves utilization. Photo: Dr. Chris Teutsch

and warm-season grasses, legumes and weedy forbs. If pastures contain warm-season grasses, use these first since their

quality will decline rapidly in late fall and early winter.

Graze pastures containing clover next. We are always happy to see clover in pastures. However, in a stockpiling scenario it does not

hold up to freezing and thawing as well as tall fescue. So mixed pastures before pure stands of tall fescue.

Save pastures with primarily tall fescue for later grazing. Tall fescue is the best grass for stockpiling in terms of maintaining its nutritive value as you head into winter. So graze pure stands last.

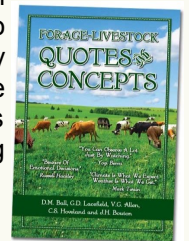
Strip graze tall fescue. As mentioned above, limiting access to stockpiled forage can significantly increase grazing days per acre. Strip grazing usually starts at the water source and then uses a single strand of electrified polywire to allocate only enough forage for the predetermined time period. It could be 1, 2, 3, or more days. The shorter the time period the better utilization you will get. Since pastures are not actively growing during the winter months, no back fencing is needed.

Bonus Tip: When strip grazing, never take your forward fence down until the back fence (new one) is up. If you do, the cows will be on the other side of the pasture!

To many producers that have not stripped grazed, the idea of moving a temporary fence two or three times a week can seem overwhelming. However, once you are set up it really goes pretty fast and the pay backs are huge—a free day of feed every time you move the fence. Is it less work than feeding hay? Probably not less, but just different and the pay back is much better. ~ Dr. Chris Teutsch

Quote of the Month: “Extending Grazing Can Be Amazing”

Opportunities to extend the grazing season vary greatly depending on climate, soils, type of farming operation and other factors. However, there are many instances where additional days of grazing can be obtained with a little effort. For example, stockpiling forage, grazing crop residues and improving grazing management are often quite effective. In many cases, winter annuals can be planted on summer row crop land and then be grazed or cut for hay or silage. Likewise, summer perennial grasses can often be over-seeded with winter annuals such as annual ryegrass and/or annual clovers to provide high quality cool season forage growth, and in many cases, a cool season legume such as red clover can be seeded into cool season perennial grass pastures to provide nitrogen, improve forage quality and extend the grazing season. Purchase Forage-Livestock Quotes and Concepts books for \$5 each by contacting ukforageextension@uky.edu.



Upcoming Events

- List of upcoming events at www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage
- OCT 17 - KY Grazing Conf. Lexington, KY
- OCT 18 - KY Grazing Conf., Hopkinsville, KY
- JAN 14-17 - 2018 AFGC Annual Meetings, Louisville, KY
- FEB 22, 2018 - KY Alfalfa and Stored Forages Conf., Cave City, KY

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