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UK Forage News

Keeping Forage-Livestock producers in Kentucky informed

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

February 2018

The New Look of Forage Extension

Well over a year ago, the UK Forage Extension team debuted a new look for Forage News. Since then, we have been busy developing a new website as well. This new site, found at www.forages.ca.uky.edu was launched in January. It's designed to be more user friendly, adapted for mobile devices, and allows producers and county agents to see all media related to a specific topic area. These areas include: Grazing Management, Soils and Fertility, Weeds, Insects and Diseases, Alfalfa, Hay and Storage, Forage Species, Variety Trials, Equine and Establishment.



Upcoming events and registration are also listed. Check out the new site today! You can still Google "KY Forages" and you'll be redirected to the new site.

KY Alfalfa Conference, Feb. 22–Cave City, KY

The annual KY Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference (sponsored by KFGC and UK) will be held Feb. 22, 2018 at the Cave City Convention Center. This year, the conference will be a workshop covering all aspects of Alfalfa Production from Establishment to Exports. Topics include: 1) Fine tuning variety selection, 2) Alfalfa Establishment, 3) Fertilizing for high producing stands, 4) Integrated weed and pest control systems, 5) Keys to harvest high quality alfalfa, 6) Mechanization to optimize efficiency, 7) Economics of new varieties, 8) Emerging export markets, 9) Understanding GMO traits and their impact. Early registration is only \$30 and can be completed online or by mail. Full details and registration at the UK Forage Website.

Forage Timely Tips: February

- ✓ Collect and submit a soil test.
- ✓ Begin frost seeding clovers on closely grazed pastures.
- ✓ Consider herbicide options for early spring weeds.
- ✓ Apply 40-50 lbs of nitrogen at green-up to promote early grass growth
- ✓ Plan pasture utilization strategy (fencing, water, shade).

Featured Publication: Kentucky Corn Silage Hybrid Performance Report, 2017

The 2017 growing season was wet early and dry later with conditions favorable for excellent corn silage yields. This year, besides silage production different between varieties, ratings were also taken for gray leaf spot (GLS) and both rusts together (Rust). This year, the most rust was common rust; however southern rust may have been present as well. Disease pressure was relatively low at all sites and a foliar fungicide likely would not have increased yields. See the full report online at <https://graincrops.ca.uky.edu/variety-testing>.

New Videos on KY Forages YouTube Channel

Several new videos have been uploaded to the KY Forages YouTube channel recently including recorded presentations from Forages at KCA, the AFGC Forage Spokesperson Contest, and the Integrated Crop-Livestock Systems Workshop. Other videos include Drill Calibration and Frost Seeding Clover. Find it from the new UK Forage Website or search for KY Forages on YouTube.



Buttercups in Grazed Pastures

One of the signs that spring has arrived is when the yellow flowers of buttercup begin to appear, but it's during the winter months that the vegetative growth of buttercup takes place. As a cool season weed, this plant often flourishes in over grazed pasture fields with poor stands of desirable forages. In fact, many fields that have dense buttercup populations are fields heavily grazed by animals during the fall through the early spring months.

Buttercups are sometimes classified as short-lived perennials, but often grow as winter annuals. Plants typically produce five, shiny yellow petals in the early spring. There are four different species of buttercups that may be found in Kentucky: bulbous buttercup (*Ranunculus bulbosus*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), tall buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), and small flower buttercup (*Ranunculus abortivus*). Although each of these plants may have somewhat similar flower heads, each of these buttercup species differs somewhat in their vegetative leaf characteristics. New seed are produced during the time petals are showy. Waiting until after

flowers appear can be too late to implement control tactics. This is one reason buttercups can survive year to year and new plants emerge each year.

Most buttercup plants emerge from seed during the fall or late winter months. Therefore, pasture management practices that improve and promote growth of desirable plants during these months is one of the best methods to help compete against the emergence and growth of this plant. Whereas, livestock animals allowed to overgraze fields during the fall and winter months is one of the main factors that contribute to buttercup problems. Mowing fields or clipping plants close to the ground in the early spring before buttercup plants can produce flowers may help reduce the amount of new seed produced, but mowing alone will not totally eliminate seed production.

For chemical control, herbicides registered for use on grass pastures that contain 2,4-D will effectively control buttercup. Depending on other weeds present products that contain dicamba+2,4-D (eg. Weedmaster), aminopyralid (eg. GrazonNext, Milestone), triclopyr (eg. PastureGard, Crossbow), or metsulfuron (eg. Cimarron) can also be used. However, legumes such as clovers interseeded with grass pastures can be severely injured or killed by these herbicide products. For optimum results apply a herbicide in the early spring (February - March) before flowers are observed, when buttercup plants are still small and actively growing. For best herbicide activity wait until daytime air temperatures is greater than 50 F for two to three consecutive days. Consult the herbicide label for further information on grazing restrictions, precautions, or other possible limitations.

For fields heavily infested with buttercup a variety of control tactics may be needed. Apply a herbicide to help reduce the population of buttercup plants in the spring plus use good pasture management techniques throughout the year to help improve and thicken the stand of desirable forages. ~ Dr. J.D. Green, Reprinted from Grazing News (grazer.ca.uky.edu).

Registration Closing soon for the 16th Annual Heart of America Grazing Conference

The 2018 Heart of America Grazing Conference will be held in Springfield, MO February 26th and 27th in combination with the 34th SW Missouri Spring Forage Conference. Monday's schedule includes a Grassland Soil Health Workshop and Keynote address from Dr. Garry Lacefield, University of Kentucky Professor Emeritus, titled "Gratitude." Tuesday is a full day of concurrent sessions, trade show and lunch keynote By Dave Pratt of Ranch Management Consultants titled "Do You Own a Job or Business? Are You Working for a Lunatic?" Advanced registration closes on February 16th. Full registration is \$80, with partial registrations available. For more info, visit springforageconference.com.

Quote of the Month: "Soil Is A Seed's Best Friend"

In order for a seed to germinate, it must absorb many times its weight in water. Furthermore, the longer it takes for the needed water to be absorbed, the longer the germinating seed, and subsequently

the young seedling, will be vulnerable to unfavorable weather conditions. Good seed-soil contact favors water uptake by seeds. Thus, practices such as drilling seed, use of a cultipacker when seed is broadcast on a prepared seedbed or even using livestock to "trample in" seed. Purchase Forage-Livestock Quotes and Concepts books for \$5 each by contacting ukforageextension@uky.edu.

Frost Seeding Red and Ladino White Clover soon

Here are a few tips to ensure you have the best chance of getting clover established from a frost seeding.

- 1) Get a current soil test, and apply the needed lime and nutrients.
- 2) Choose an improved variety with known performance and genetics. Go to the UK Forage Website for the latest results.
- 3) Seed 6-8 lbs red clover and 1-2 lbs of white/ladino clover per acre.
- 4) Make sure seed lands on bare soil. The biggest cause of seeding failure with frost seedings is too much ground cover.
- 5) Get good seed soil contact with a no-till drill with packer wheels or a corrugated roller cultipacker.
- 6) Control competition when the grass starts growing.

KY Small Ruminant Grazing Conference, Feb. 10

The annual KY Small Ruminant Grazing conference will be held in Madisonville, KY on Sat., Feb. 10th from 8-2:30. The conference will highlight maintaining healthy sheep and goats on pasture. Specific topics include Deworming, Pasture Renovation, Summer Annuals, Economic Considerations, Plant ID and a producer Panel. Registration for the full day is only \$35 with a registration deadline of Feb. 5th. Dr. Beth Johnson is offering the FAMACHA Parasite Diagnostic training class immediately after the conference for only \$18. The full agenda and registration details are on the UK forage website or call Tom Keene (859-257-3144).

Novel Tall Fescue Workshop March 8th, Lexington

The University of Kentucky and the Alliance for Grassland Renewal will again offer a workshop covering all aspects of the establishment and management of the new novel tall fescue varieties on March 8 at the new Bluegrass Stockyards across I-75 from the KY Horse Park. Cattle producers that replace KY31 pastures with novel varieties consistently have higher conception rates and higher average daily gains. Full details and registration for the workshop are on the UK Forage website.

Upcoming Events

FEB 10 - Small Ruminant Grazing Conf., Madisonville, KY
FEB 22 - Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conf., Cave City, KY
FEB 26-27 - Heart of America Graz. Conf. Springfield, MO
MAR 8 - Novel Tall Fescue Workshop, Lexington, KY
APR 24-25 - KY Grazing School, Princeton, KY
May 31 - Equine Farm/Facilities Expo, Harrodsburg, KY

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