



7-2017

Forage News [2017-07]

University of Kentucky Department of Plant and Soil Sciences

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Repository Citation

University of Kentucky Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, "Forage News [2017-07]" (2017). *Forage News*. 12.
https://uknowledge.uky.edu/forage_news/12

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UK Forage News

Keeping Forage-Livestock producers in Kentucky informed
 Dr. S. Ray Smith and Krista Lea, MS.~ Editors

July 2017

Featured Publication: 2016 Cool-Season Grass Grazing Tolerance Report (PR-717)

Grass variety tests for grazing tolerance were established in Lexington in the fall of 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015. The soil at Lexington (Maury) is a well-drained silt loam and is well-suited to tall fescue, orchardgrass, and perennial ryegrass production.

Table 8. Seedling vigor, grazing preference, and stand persistence of orchardgrass varieties sown September 9, 2014, in a cattle grazing tolerance study at Lexington, Kentucky.

Variety	Seedling Vigor ¹ Oct 9, 2014	Grazing Preference ²		Percent Stand				
		2015	2016	2014	2015		2016	
		May 1	Apr 26	Oct 9	Apr 6	Oct 21	Mar 24	Oct 17
Commercial Varieties-Available for Farm Use								
Persist	3.7	2.7	3.4	98	99	98	98	78*
Prodigy	4.8	2.7	3.3	100	100	97	98	75*
SS-0708OGDT	4.7	2.5	3.2	99	99	98	99	75*
Benchmark Plus	4.8	2.5	3.3	98	98	98	98	73*
Prairie	4.3	2.8	2.8	98	98	97	98	65
Profit	4.8	3.5	3.2	99	98	97	98	65
Tekapo	4.3	8.8	4.4	99	81	81	83	52
Harvestar	4.2	6.5	4.0	98	95	93	93	42

2017 Kentucky Grazing School

The Kentucky Grazing School will be held on September 27-28, 2017 at the Woodford County Extension office and the Oran C. Little Research Center in Versailles, KY. This two day program includes hands-on exercises, such as building temporary paddocks and watering systems, and assessing pasture production. Classroom discussions will cover topics including forages, animal management, and grazing systems. Enrollment is limited, so apply early. Past participants range from new to experienced grazers and all have gained new information and skills to implement on their operations. Pre-register for the grazing school as enrollment is limited to the first 45. The \$50.00 registration fee includes all materials, grazing manuals, breaks, and lunch both days. Partially funded through the Governor's Office of Agriculture Policy. For more information, contact Zach Workman, 859-257-7512, Zewo222@uky.edu or visit the UK Forage Website.

KFGC Annual Field Day- August 7- Daviess County

Tim Taylor will host the 2017 Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council Annual Field Day Mon, August 7th on his farm in Daviess County. Registration begins at 4:45 with Farm tour and Educational sessions at 5:30 and a meal at 7:30. Topics include Grazing Corn, Annual Forage Systems, Pasture Re-Establishment and Maximizing Beef Profit Per Acre. Farm address is 8706

Hwy 81, Owensboro, KY To register, call 270-685-8480.

Southern Pasture Conference

The 71st Southern Pasture and Forage Crop Improvement Conference (SPFCIC) was held June 5 to 7 in Knoxville, Tennessee. Hosted by the University of Tennessee's Institute of Agriculture, this program featured presentations and discussion on drought, climate resilient forage systems as well as soil health. Access the proceedings at <http://agrilife.org/spfcic/>.



The meeting featured a poster sharing session from research and extension specialists in the southern region. UK and UT presented a poster summarizing preliminary results of an Organic Dairy Forage Production study currently underway in both states.

Faculty, students and staff of UT Knoxville arranged an educational tour of establishment, management, and benefits of native warm season grasses. Participants were able to tour a commercial bioprocessing facility as well as research farms that were utilizing and studying native grasses.

The 50 participants included representatives from southern region universities, county extension and industry. The 2018 conference will be in early summer in Fayetteville, Arkansas. ~ Dr. Jimmy Henning

UK Farm Visit Connects Students to Forages

A field trip to the University of Kentucky's Spindletop research farm gave Millcreek Elementary School students the opportunity to get out of the city and learn about the pastures for which Kentucky is so famous.

"Most of these kids are from the city or the suburbs, and only a few of them have any kind of farm background," said Ray Smith, UK extension forage specialist. "We wanted to show them where their food comes from, how horses are raised and the kinds of things horses eat, so they have an understanding of Kentucky agriculture."

Students rotated through several educational stations on the farm. They walked through a typical horse pasture and learned to identify and collect different grasses and weeds. The students helped the UK forages group by

collecting seeds from a field containing Woodford Big Flower Vetch, a variety that is nearly extinct, although small populations continue to grow at Spindletop.

Krista Lea, UK research analyst, said one of the goals of the day was to interest kids in agriculture and science. "Many of them said this was the first time they had ever been out on a farm. It's really cool to get them out here and to see what UK offers," she said. "Maybe they'll want to come to school here one day, but even if they don't, they'll just have a better appreciation of agriculture." ~ Katie Pratt

Seeding Late Summer Annuals

If you are finding your feed supplies may be short later this summer or next winter then an option is a late planting BMR sorghum or Sorghum-Sudangrass. Both forages can be cut for silage or the sorghum-sudangrass can be grazed. The cost is a fraction of corn, and drilled, it will get out of the ground quickly to capture sunlight for maximum yield. In NY a planting July 8, 2016, harvested Oct 7 at maturity (one cut system), produced an average of 18 tons/A on a 35% DM basis for both forages.

Harvest management is critical for fermentation to reduce potential for clostridia and butyric formation. Choosing a variety with the dry stalk gene, will help since there is less moisture in the stem. With enough growth you can direct chop (if not, then mow, windrow and chop). For round bale silage (baleage) we suggest BMR Sudangrass with its higher quality and smaller stems for wrapped bales. Additionally you can use a processing knife on the baler to reduce stalk size to a manageable level. Use a homolactic inoculant for wet forages.

Another warm season crop that is getting more attention is BMR pearl millet. It has higher leaf to stem ratio than Sorghum-Sudan which gives it very high feed quality. Pearl millet does not have prussic acid management issues. Pearl millet has thinner stems that may be easier to round bale for wrapping. Pearl millet is wet though so direct chopping is doubtful. ~ Excerpted from Tom Kilcer's July 2017 Newsletter, www.advancedagsys.com. For information on warm season annual grass yields go to the UK Forage Website under Variety Trials.

Plan Ahead Now for Fall Seeding

While summer officially started late June, now is the best time to begin planning for fall seeding. Failure to do so often results in missing seeding windows or inability to secure the needed supplies such as seed, herbicides and equipment. Below are a few quick reminders to improving seeding success.

- Spray herbicides now. Most herbicides require six weeks or more before seeding perennial grasses, so if you are planning to seed in September, herbicides should be applied soon. Be sure to read and follow all label instructions.
- Research and purchase seed now. New and productive varieties may not be available in high quantities, so purchase seed now to prepare for seeding late August - mid-September
- Perform routine maintenance and any **see blue.**

repairs needed on seeding equipment. Seed placement is crucial to seeding success.

- Ensure soil fertility. If you haven't soil tested in the last 3 years for pastures or last year for hay fields, do so now and apply any needed lime, P or K as recommended. For all cool-season pastures, fall nitrogen is recommended to boost root reserves and increase winter survival.

For more information on fall establishment, contact your local county extension agent or check out our list of publications at www.uky.edu/ag/forages.

Will 2017 Hay Prices Soar or Bore?

Make it three — three consecutive months when hay prices have pushed higher, according to USDA's *Agricultural Prices* report released last week. But should that excite hay market sellers and depress those on the buying side? Let's take a deeper look.

The all-hay price bumped to \$143 per ton, up \$11 per ton from the previous month and only \$1 lower than April 2016. Hay other than alfalfa was up \$5 per ton from \$127 to \$132, which is \$7 per ton higher than April 2016. The positive sign here is that hay prices are at least holding steady with 2016. Year-to-year hay prices have been in a continual decline since 2014, and the last time the April hay price was higher than the previous year was 2013.

The margin for hay-supply error has certainly narrowed, and there is good reason to believe that prices have hit bottom. But how much upside is there going to be relative to 2016? That's really the pertinent question. I believe it will mostly hinge on Mother Nature and livestock prices, though other factors will play supportive roles in specific regions. For example, both export and dairy markets compete for available hay resources in the West. ~ Mike Rankin. For full article, visit HayandForageGrower.com.

Quote of the Month: Bare Soil Grows No Forage

This statement is obvious, but it expresses a concept that every forage-livestock manager needs to keep in mind. Leaves are like solar panels that capture energy from the sun. If there is no forage stand, or only a thin forage stand, little energy will be captured. Practices that favor good stand establishment create potential for solar collection and photosynthesis. Subsequent grazing management that favors development and maintenance of ample leaf area will result in high photosynthesis and more forage production. Growing more leaves allows grazing of more leaves. Go to the UK Forage Website under Forage Books to order your copy of *Forage-Livestock Quotes and Concepts*

Upcoming Events

List of upcoming events at www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage
AUG 7 KFGC Field Day, Owensboro, KY
SEPT 27-28 KY 2-day Grazing School, Versailles, KY
OCT 17 Kentucky Grazing Conference, Lexington, KY
JAN 14-17 AFGC Annual Meetings, Louisville, KY
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