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## Forage News [2016-10]

University of Kentucky Department of Plant and Soil Sciences

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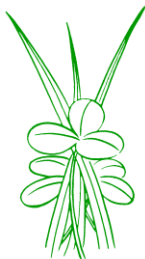
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# FORAGE NEWS

**October 2016**

*S. Ray Smith, Extension Forage Specialist and Krista Lea, MS*

## **KY Grazing Conference Write up**

Registration for the 16<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference is now open online. The program will be held on October 19<sup>th</sup> in Somerset KY; speakers include Dr. Glen Aiken, Mrs. Anne Bays, Dr. Greg Brann, Dr. Peter Byck, Dr. Greg Halich, Mr. Adam Jones and Ms. Kelly Prince. Online registration (\$20) can be found at <https://KYGrazingConference.eventbrite.com>

A highlight will be the KY Forage Spokesperson Contest (four of the top forage farmers and cattle producers in KY). Another unique highlight for this year will be the presentation from a movie producer, Peter Byck, from the Univ. of Arizona. In the last few years, he has become well known and received numerous awards for his short films (10-15 min) on the value that well managed pastures have on the environment and adding carbon to the soil. You may not agree with everything in his films, but he is helping convince the urban population that cattle production and pasture management provide huge environmental benefits. You can view one of his recent films at: [soil carbon cowboys](http://soil_carbon_cowboys). Other films at [carbonnationmovie.com](http://carbonnationmovie.com)

Sponsorship opportunities are also available and include registration for two individuals. Sponsorship registration (\$250) and silent auction entries can be completed online at <https://KYGrazingConference.eventbrite.com> and click on "Company".

## **Tribute to a Forage Legend: Warren Thompson**

May 31, 1918 – September 17, 2016

Mr. Warren Thompson was born in Fulton County, Kentucky. He grew up on a grain and livestock family farm established in 1899. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from the University of Kentucky. He began his professional career in 1942 as Assistant County Agent in Hickman County, Kentucky and became County Agent in 1943. In 1958, he accepted the position as Extension Forage Specialist at the University of Kentucky and retired in 1973. Following



his first retirement, he worked as Forage Consultant, Agriculture Journalist and was in great demand as a speaker on many forage topics throughout the USA. In 1975, he accepted the position as Manager, Forage Marketing Programs with North American Plant Breeders and became National

Forage Specialist with ABI in 1987, where he retired for the second time in 2004. After 2004 Warren (Mr. Alfalfa or Mr. Forage as he was known) continued to travel, speak and mentor many "Forage Workers" across the USA and abroad.



Warren was the most recognized forage worker in the USA. He received every state and national award in Forages including: AFGC Merit and Medallion, Progressive Farmer Man of the Year, Alfalfa Extension Award, KFGC Public Service Award, Alfalfa Industry Award, Department of Agriculture Distinguished Service Award and was inducted as an International Honorary Member of the North American Alfalfa Improvement Conference. He organized the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council and was a driving force in the development of the American Forage and Grassland Council. Warren contributed to all areas of forage; however, his signature programs included: Pasture Renovation, Alfalfa, Alfalfa Grazing, Forage Quality and the Role of Forages in Soil Conservation.

Warren Thompson made a difference!!! He was a dedicated, experienced, passionate national forage leader. I was honored to have him as my mentor, colleague, supporter, encourager and dear friend. I can say without hesitation he had more positive impact on me and my forage knowledge and programs than anyone throughout my 41 year career as Extension Forage Specialist at the University of Kentucky.

See the UK Forage Website for special tributes to Warren and a slide show.

~ Garry D. Lacefield, Professor Emeritus, Univ. of KY

## **Frost and Freezes Increase Cyanide Poisoning Risk**

Cyanide poisoning, more commonly referred to as prussic acid poisoning, can have a very abrupt and deadly effect on ruminant livestock grazing forages and requires careful management as frosts and freezes begin in the area. Plants, such as sorghum, sudangrass, sorghum-sudan hybrids, Johnsongrass, wild cherry, and others, contain compounds that produce free cyanide when these plants are damaged by frost or drought conditions. Grazing these plants when they are producing young shoots (less than 18 inches tall) also increases the risk. Using caution when grazing these forages during times of stress can usually eliminate the possibility of

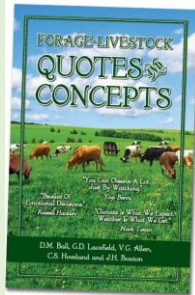
cyanide poisoning in livestock. Waiting for two weeks after a light frost (temperature greater than 28°F) is recommended. For a killing frost, wait until the material is completely dry and brown (usually cyanide dissipates within 72 hours). Grazing at night when a frost is likely is not recommended as high levels of cyanide are produced within hours after frost occurs. Delay feeding silage for six to eight weeks following ensiling of forages in the sorghum family. If cut for hay, allow to dry completely so the cyanide will volatilize prior to baling. For more information, follow this link to the UK publication "Cyanide Poisoning in Ruminants": <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/ID/ID220/ID220.pdf>.

### Kentucky Cattlemen Association Presents Forage Specialist Funds at the KFGC Field Day

At the KFGC Field Day on September 13<sup>th</sup>, Kentucky Cattlemen Association Executive Vice President Dave Maples presented a check for \$25,000 to Dr. Ray Smith in support of the hiring of Dr. Chris Teutsch as the Forage Extension Specialist in Princeton. Industry support from KCA, KFGC, and other groups, both monetary and verbal, was key in moving forward with filling this position after Dr. Garry Lacefield retired in February 2015. An additional \$25,000 will be given at the start of the year.

### Forage News Quote of the Month "Beware of Emotional Decision" ~ Russell Hackely

Studies on marketing psychology indicate that although people may think they make decisions based only on information and logic, they commonly make them based on emotion. This is why the best chance a speaker or performer has to sell books or recordings is immediately after a speech or performance. Actually, decisions of many types are often based on emotion. In forage-livestock production, as in other areas of life, emotional decisions may be appropriate if they accomplish a meaningful personal objective. However, when the focus is on profitability, one should strive to remove emotion from the decision-making process.



To purchase the Forage-Livestock Quotes and Concepts book, contact KFGC at [ukforageextension@uky.edu](mailto:ukforageextension@uky.edu). Books are \$5 each.

### Fall Nitrogen Boosts Winter Survival and Spring Greenup

A primary goal in pastures is to maintain a consistent plant growth pattern throughout the growing season. Unlike hay production where we add nitrogen at green-up for high hay yields, Mother Nature usually provides enough spring growth of pastures without added nitrogen. While we emphasize N in August for stockpiling, fall is also a good time to add small amounts of N to cool season grass pastures (remember no need to add N if you have more than 30% clover). It's also a good time to soil test and lime and fertilize (P and K) based on recommendations.

Applying 30-50 lbs/acre of actual N in October to early November promotes tillering and root growth without excessive top growth as grasses prepare for dormancy. Growth of summer annual grasses is waning and a fall N

application gives desirable cool season grasses an opportunity to compete for sunlight and nutrients.

Stands will "thicken up" and become healthier going into the winter, and they will stay green longer and green up earlier in the spring. A healthy and strong plant has a much better opportunity to compete next year with summer annual weeds such as ragweed, yellow foxtail, etc.

### Master Grazer's new Coordinator, Jacob Brandenburg



The Master Grazer Program is excited to announce that Jacob Brandenburg joined the team on August 22<sup>nd</sup> as the new Master Grazer Coordinator. Jacob is a native of Powell County where he has a background in a variety of agriculture enterprises including horticulture, crop production, and beef cattle. He graduated from Morehead State

University in May with an undergraduate degree in Agronomy. Jacob recently completed a summer internship in the Breathitt County Extension Office. Through his summer internship he showed excellent communication skills, a hard work ethic, and a passion for agriculture that will be strong assets for our Master Grazer team. We look forward to introducing Jacob to many of you at upcoming winter meetings.

### Featured Publication: Calculating Carrying Capacity Using Web Soil Survey, AGR-222

The stocking rate of livestock on a pasture is known to have a significant impact on both forage productivity and financial profitability of an operation. Too many animals in a field results in overgrazing and the need to provide costly supplemental feed; too few animals result in underutilized forages and therefore lost income. While many factors influence how many animals a farm can carry, soil type has a major influence and should be considered when purchasing, leasing, planning, or managing livestock on pastures. Using Web Soil Survey is a simple way to determine the soil types on your farm.

Carrying capacity is defined as the number of animals that the environment can sustain indefinitely given the food, habitat, water and other necessities available in the environment. For livestock, carrying capacity refers to how many animals a farm or pasture can carry throughout the year without negative environmental impacts. Carrying capacity is based on the soil type and slope of the land, characteristics that take thousands of years or more to change. The productive capacity of the land will dictate what that land is most useful for. The full publication explaining how to use Web Soil Survey can be found at [www.uky.edu/ag/forage](http://www.uky.edu/ag/forage).

### Upcoming Events ([www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage))

OCT 1 Mountain Proud Field Day, Quicksand, KY

OCT 19 KY Grazing Conference, Somerset, KY

DEC 1 KFB Forage Session, Louisville, KY

JAN 20, 2017 Forages at KCA, Lexington, KY

JAN 22-24, 2017 AFGC Annual Meeting, Roanoke, VA

FEB 21, 2017 36<sup>th</sup> Annual KY Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference, Cave City, KY