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6-2016

Forage News [2016-06]

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Repository Citation

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky, "Forage News [2016-06]" (2016). *Forage News*. 21.

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FORAGE NEWS

For more forage information, visit our UK Forage Extension Website at: <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/>

June 2016

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

National Forage Week is June 19-25, 2016

The American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC) and other forage organizations are celebrating National Forage Week for the second year in a row. AFGC is striving to bring farming and forages into greater public awareness and inform consumers about the role of forages and forage production.



AFGC is asking for support from forage producers to help get the word out by putting up fliers in local farm supply stores, sending press releases to hometown papers, arranging for a public service listing on local business reader boards and posting on Facebook, Twitter or other

social media posts. AFGC will be equipping each of their 22 state forage affiliates with promotional materials in addition to the national organization's campaign. Promotional materials may be acquired by emailing: info@afgc.org or go to AFGC.org.

~ Tina Bowling, AFGC Executive Director

AFGC New Zealand Tour Itinerary Available Online

Preliminary itineraries for the AFGC New Zealand tour are now available online at www.afgc.org. Option 1 begins in Auckland and includes stops at Hobbiton beef and sheep farm, CRV Dairy Farm in Ohaupo, Taupo Beef, Massey University and Lincoln University Dairy Farm in Christchurch before spending three days at the NZ Grasslands Conference. Details can be found at www.afgc.org/new_zealand.

~ Krista Lea

Eden Shale Farm Forage Establishment Field Day – June 16, 2016

The Forage Establishment Field Day at Eden Shale Farm will be held on June 16th and is sponsored by USDA ARS, Dow AgroSciences, Barenbrug and the Kentucky Beef Network. This free event will run 5:30-8:00 pm and includes dinner. Topics and speakers include: Options for Managing Fescue Toxicosis, *Dr. Glen Aiken*; Successful establishment of

grasses and legumes, *Dr. Ray Smith*; Proper selection, timing, and use of herbicides for weed control when establishing cool and warm-season grasses, *Dr. Scott Flynn*; Selecting the Right forage species to fill gaps in your production system, *Kade Hass*; and Spray equipment and Planter demonstrations for those who wish to stay, *Dr. Scott Flynn, Kade Hass and others*.

RSVP to Dan Miller at 859-278-0899 or dmiller@kycattle.org. The Eden Shale Farm is located at 245 Eden Shale Road, Owenton, KY 40359 ~ Krista Lea

Annual Forage Workers Tour a chance for Forage researchers to collaborate, learn and share

University of Kentucky faculty and staff in the College of Agriculture, Food, and Environment participated in the annual Forage Workers Tour. This year, the tour featured several locations in south and southeastern Kentucky, highlighting different aspects of the agricultural community. The tour kicked off with a visit to Tarter Farm and Ranch Equipment where the group learned how Tarter makes their famous gates. Peddicord Gelbveih Beef Operation was the first farm visited on the trip. This farm demonstrated how they handled their cool season forage pastures to benefit their purebred beef herd. The first day of visits ended with Ray Lewis Coffey Beef Operation where Mr. Coffey backgrounds stockers through the winter on stockpiled fescue. His operation also includes vegetable production for a roadside market stand.

John and Anne Bays presented Moonlight Farms to the group the following morning, highlighting their grass-fed Scottish Highland cattle. In addition to raising beef, the Bays also raise hogs and chickens to supplement their private sale of beef to their local community. Just west of Corbin, we visited Gerald Hart and toured his vegetable production operation and roadside market. Mr. Hart grows a range of vegetables in hoop houses and outside for almost year round production.

~ AnnMarie Kadnar

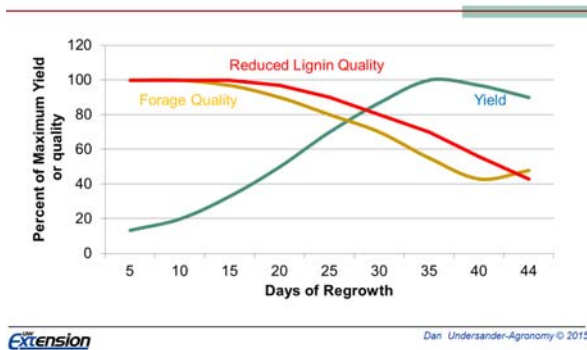
Heart of America Grazing Conference Highlight: Reduced or Low Lignin Alfalfa: Advantages for Hay and Grazing.

Lignin is an essential structural component of all land plants. It fills spaces in the cell wall between cellulose, hemicellulose, and pectin. Lignin provides strength for plants, from giant Sequoia trees to alfalfa growing in hay fields. A

good analogy is that lignin is like the steel reinforcing rods in concrete. Life on earth would not be possible without lignin to allow plants to grow upright. The limitation for livestock is that lignin is indigestible. In recent years, forage breeders have also developed reduced lignin alfalfa varieties. These varieties have often been called low-lignin alfalfa, but the term “Reduced Lignin” is preferred because it is essential that enough lignin remains in the alfalfa stems to prevent lodging.

How to Use Reduced Lignin Varieties

Dr. Dan Undersander (Univ. of Wisconsin) gives three main benefits of reduced lignin alfalfa: 1) Higher quality forage (if harvested at same time), 2) Wider harvest window (if rain), and 3) Higher yield (if harvested later at same quality). Feeding trials are being conducted at 3 to 4 universities over this winter period and there will be actual feeding data available later this year. One of the greatest advantages of the reduced lignin alfalfa varieties is that alfalfa quality does not change as fast around harvest. This means that the window of harvest is lengthened and, if rain delays, the impact on quality will not be as great. Another advantage of delayed harvest is that it improves winter survival and rate of spring green-up the next year.



Full Proceedings from the 2016 Heart of America Grazing Conference and other Kentucky Forage Conferences over the last 35 years can be found on the UK Forage extension website. ~ Dr. Ray Smith.

Toxic Topic: Johnsongrass Poisoning in Horses

Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*) is a perennial drought-tolerant, warm season grass that can be found in some KY pastures and hayfields. Drought conditions can cause a dying off of cool season pasture grasses while this weedy grass survives and flourishes. Cattle producers can achieve good animal production on pastures containing Johnsongrass, but it can be toxic to horses. Supplemental hay should be provided on horse pastures that contain significant amounts of Johnsongrass. All sorghums, including Johnsongrass, can be associated with four major disease syndromes in horses: 1. Neuropathy (nerve damage) and teratogenesis (damaging effects to the fetus); 2. Photosensitization; 3. Nitrate intoxication; and 4. Acute cyanide poisoning. In horses, symptoms of poisoning can occur after a few weeks to months of continuously grazing Johnsongrass or other sorghums, at any growth stage of the plant.

The condition is sporadic, and not all horses eating sorghums are affected. The amount of sorghum that needs to be ingested for clinical signs to occur has not been established, but poisoning generally requires continuous exposure to large amounts of sorghum related species for several weeks or longer. Prevention is important and includes minimizing

exposure to Johnsongrass and other sorghums by controlling these plants in hayfields and pastures and by not feeding hay containing sorghums. Johnsongrass can be controlled in pastures by mowing and close grazing; control in hayfields is more problematic. Consult your local county agent for more information on controlling Johnsongrass.

~ Dr. Cynthia Gaskill, UK Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Featured Publication: Producer’s Guide to Pasture-Based Beef Finishing ID-224

New and expanded local demand for pasture-based beef has created opportunities in the upper south for cattle farmers who want to tap into this market. This new market will not be for everyone. Challenges and risks not associated with conventional cow-calf and stocker enterprises are detailed in this publication. A high profit potential is available for those who are willing to take these risks and can consistently produce a high-yielding finished animal that consumers enjoy eating. Three of the authors of this publication are currently pasture-finishing cattle (two with a pure-forage approach and one with a grain-on-grass approach) and can personally attest to the profit potential. As with any new enterprise, however, the learning curve is steep, and success requires a commitment to working through the many production, marketing, and processing details. This reference guide provides a foundation for this process. The full publication can be found on the UK Forages webpage under forage publications/grazing.

Forage News Quote of the Month
“Hay Moisture Can Be a Burning Issue”

Hay baled at too high a moisture level will heat excessively. Small square bales should be baled at 20% moisture or less, and large round bales at 18% moisture or less. In addition to causing reduced digestibility of protein and fiber, heating can sometimes result in a hay fire. Hay temperatures below 120°F is normal and safe; between 120°F and 140°F is considered a caution zone, at which the hay should be closely monitored. If the temperature goes above 160°F, fire is likely. To lower fire hazard, fresh green hay should never be stored against older, dry hay. Hay that is heating to an unacceptable, dangerous level should be moved to a spot where fire will not destroy anything other than the hay. Fire danger generally subsides within two to three weeks after baling. To purchase the Forage-Livestock Quotes and Concepts book, contact KFGC at ukforageextension@uky.edu. Books are \$5 each.

Upcoming Events (www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage)

- JUNE 16 Forage Establishment Field Day, Edenshale Farm
- JUNE 19-25 National Forage Week
- JULY 17-22 International Rangeland Congress, SK, Canada.
- AUG 11 Organic Association of KY Pasture Walk. Washington Co., KY
- SEPT 13 KFGC Field Day, Edenshale Farm
- SEPT 22 Beef Bash, Princeton, KY
- OCT 19 KY Grazing Conference, Somerset, KY
- JAN 22-24 AFGC Annual Meeting, Roanoke, VA