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Forage News

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## Forage News [2015-09]

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky

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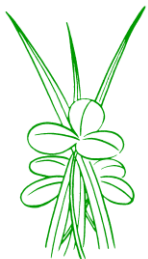
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# FORAGE NEWS

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

## September 2015

*S. Ray Smith, Extension Forage Specialist and Susan Leopold, secretary*

### Plan to Attend KFGC Field Day – September 17, 2015

The Kentucky and Forage Council's annual field day will be held this year at Woodland Place farm at 2743 Fidelio Road, Pembroke, KY 42266 (just south of Hopkinsville). Hugh David and Lacy Orem will be our hosts on their 5<sup>th</sup> generation forage, beef cattle and crop farm. They have worked closely with their Ag. Agent Jay Stone (Christian County) to line up an excellent program.

3:30 Registration and view exhibits

4:15 Overview of Woodland Place farm and wagon tours begin

4:30 -5:00 pm – Weed Control in Alfalfa – Dr. J.D. Green, UK Weed Specialist

5:00 -5:30 pm - Rotational Grazing and Using Cover Crops for Compaction Issues, Dr. Ray Smith, UK Forage Specialist

5:30 – 6:00 pm - Beef Reproduction – Dr. Les Anderson, UK Beef Specialist

6:15 pm – Meal and KFGC Forage Spokesperson Contest

7:15 Program on Hay Quality – Mr. John Nowak, Western KY Hay Producer and KFGC Past-President

Call 270-886-6328 right away to register for this free event.

### Planning for 2016 Heart of America Grazing Conference

Several of you have recently asked me about the details for the Heart of America Grazing Conference in Ohio that we have been advertising in recent months. Unfortunately, unforeseen circumstances have caused the cancellation of this event, but I'm glad to announce that the next Heart of America Grazing conference will be held in Lexington, KY Jan 25-26, 2016. More details coming in the next Forage News.

### Forage Advice from our Extension Dean

Dr. Jimmy Henning was Forage Extension Specialist in Kentucky from 1990 to 2003. During that time he made many important contributions to improved forage production in our state. Dr. Henning is now Associate Dean for Extension and Director of the Cooperative Extension Service at the University of Kentucky. Although he has been serving KY farmers as an administrator for over 10 years, Dr. Henning is still a highly regarded forage expert and was recently a guest columnist for the KY Cattleman's Association Cow County News. Below I've highlighted some of his important forage advice from that column. See your September issue of Cow Country News for more details or go online to: <http://www.kycattle.org/cowcountrynews.html>.

The following are a few considerations for improved profitability for forage operations in your cattle enterprise.

1. Re-invest some of your cattle revenue into improving soil fertility. Fall is a perfect time to soil test, and to apply needed nutrients. For pasture fields, challenge yourself to address the limestone, P and K needs of your key hay and pasture fields.

These nutrients are especially important for yield and persistence of legumes.

2. Test your hay. Excessive and frequent rain earlier this summer led to overly mature and often rain-damaged hay. Fortunately, late season hay crops made from most KY hay fields has the potential for some excellent quality hay. Therefore, hay quality will vary greatly this year, but testing hay in Kentucky is easier than ever. Many extension offices have hay probes and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture offers a very cost effective testing program. To contact KDA for hay testing call (502) 782-9210.

3. Fall, especially early September, is great month for forage establishment, especially cool season grasses. The strong cattle market means that investing in higher quality forage crops like endophyte free tall fescue, novel endophyte tall fescue, orchardgrass, clover and alfalfa will produce greater returns. Even simple solutions can make a big difference like drilling orchardgrass and red clover into thinning alfalfa stands to extend useful stand life. Go to the UK Forage Website to read our AGR-18 publication for details on seeding rates, dates, etc. for over 50 forages and crops adapted to Kentucky.

4. Use improved varieties. Kentucky producers have access to a more information on locally adapted forage varieties than almost any other state in the nation. Annually we test over 20 species of grasses and legumes for forage yield including the silage yield of new corn and wheat varieties. Check out the individual forage species reports or the 15 Year Summary under the Forage Variety Trial link of the UK Forage Website. In addition to yield, we test for persistence under grazing.

### Managing Cereal Rye and Annual Ryegrass

Winter annuals, such as cereal rye and annual ryegrass, can provide a high-quality forage alternative to traditional winter feeding programs that rely heavily on stored forages. These forages can provide valuable grazing time in late fall and early winter, and again in early spring. Cereal rye has been a traditional winter cover crop grown in rotation with corn and soybeans. Rye is the most winter hardy of all small grains. It can be sown in late August to provide fall grazing, excellent winter cover, and spring grazing. Rye's rapid growth makes it the most productive small grain for pasture and it can be grazed as quickly as 4 to 6 weeks after planting.

Annual ryegrass is a fast-growing bunchgrass that is a great companion forage when seeded with small grains, such as cereal rye, and is one of the highest quality cool-season grasses. Some annual ryegrass varieties are not as winter hardy as cereal rye, but new varieties have been produced that dependably survive Kentucky winters (see UK Forage Variety Trials). This grass is best adapted to fertile, well-drained soils, but it can survive and produce good growth on wetter soils. For best results, annual ryegrass needs to be seeded into a prepared seedbed or no-tilled into killed sod, crop fields,

dormant bermudagrass, or pastures with a lot of crabgrass. Note: annual ryegrass should not be seeded into fields that may be seeded to wheat in the future, as there are no effective herbicides to control volunteer annual ryegrass plants in wheat.

	Annual Ryegrass	Cereal Rye
Seeding Rate	20-30 lbs/acre	90-120 lbs/acre
Seeding Depth	1/4 - 1/2"	1-2 inches
Seeding Date	Mid-Aug. to Oct 1	Mid-Aug to Oct 15
Begin Grazing	8-10 inches tall	6-12 inches tall
End Grazing	2-3 inches	3-4 inches
Yield (on a dry matter basis)	2-5 tons/acre	2-5 tons/acre

For more information on other options for fall and winter grazing see the full article in the August issue of "Grazing News" on the Master Grazer website, <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/grazer/>

### Bermudagrass Stem Maggot

If you've planted bermudagrass in recent years and see yellow or brown leaf tips (before there's a frost) then you could have damage the bermudagrass stem maggot. The larvae of this tiny fly, a native of Asia, have been damaging bermudagrass pastures and hayfields across the South since 2010. The insect and its characteristic damage were found in several Allen County fields by the Ag. Agent Steve Osborne in 2013. There was no reports in 2014, but Steve reported infestations again in several fields in 2015.

Damage varies with the growth stage of the grass; numbers of flies present, which increases during the summer; and drought stress.



Close-up view of stem maggot injury showing dead tip and the adult maggot fly (1/8 in long) (Photo: Lee Townsend, UK)

### Management

- Bermudagrass fields should be checked regularly for damage from until frost.
- Consider control if more than 20% of plants show dead tips.
- Early harvest and removing bales from the field is a good management alternative.
- Application of a labeled insecticide within 7 to 10 days of harvest of an infested field can cut down on re-infestation by later generations of the fly.

Lee Townsend, Extension Entomologist (excerpted from the Aug. issue of KY Pest News <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/kpn/>)

### Silage from Flooded Corn

I have had this question from two agents recently. What should you do with a field of corn that the river has backflooded and covered the ears and the stalks and ears still have a covering of silt. Will it hurt to make baleage out of this corn? Our answer is that we're not sure, but the soil can carry botulism spores which can be disastrous. Our recommendation is to strip graze the field if it's beyond harvesting for grain. Many producers in KY have been successfully grazing standing corn for many years.

### Enter the SE Hay Contest for Major Prizes

Hay and baleage producers in the Southeast could earn major prizes in this year's Southeastern Hay Contest at the Sunbelt Ag Expo in South Georgia in October. Massey Ferguson is the title sponsor for the SE Hay Contest this year and they will be providing the Grand Prize of a new Massey Ferguson RK Series rotary rake for the 2016 hay season and a \$1000 cash prize or the use of a new DM Series Professional disc mower for 2016 season. Other cash awards will be given in each of the 7 categories. The deadline for entry is 5 p.m. on Monday, September 28, 2015. More information about the Contest, including the rules and entry forms, is available at [bit.ly/SEHayContest2015](http://bit.ly/SEHayContest2015).

### Persistence an important part of alfalfa cutting equation

A recent article from the Hay and Forage Grower website (Aug. 2015) reminds us of the importance of fall management for alfalfa persistence and the risk of winter injury. For many years in KY the time period of September 15 to November 1 was designated the "critical fall no-cut period" for alfalfa. More science and improved genetics has been added to the fall harvest decision-making process in recent years. Dan Undersander, Univ. of WI Extension forage agronomist, reminds growers that it's still important to cut alfalfa early enough to give time for replenishment of root carbohydrates and proteins, or cut it late enough after regrowth potential is low. However, recent from Quebec, Canada shows it's much less about dates than it is about weather following harvest.

Alfalfa needs 500 accumulated growing degree units (base 41) between cutting and the first 24°F killing frost to regrow sufficiently for good winter survival; enough time for root reserves to rebuild. By contrast, waiting to cut when there was little chance of regrowth (something less than 200 growing degree units after harvest) also improved the probability of winter survival. Given that most of us don't know for sure what weather conditions might follow harvest, it then becomes a probability numbers game based on historical weather records.

Fortunately, we are learning that the intensity of previous harvest management is a part of the equation. Stands that are cut early and often during the summer will benefit more from a long fall growth period than those that have been managed more conservatively (35 or more days between cuttings). Stressed stands, weakened from low fertility (especially low K), insect pressure, too much or not enough moisture, are also more at risk from inappropriately timed fall harvests. Today's varieties are much improved over 25 years ago. Simply put, assuming you select top genetics, at least some of the risk factor from fall cutting has been taken away.

With the numerous alfalfa cutting management factors to be considered this time of year, perhaps the most important is simply the need for feed. If forage inventories are more than adequate, why take the chance to cut alfalfa when insufficient regrowth time will exist or when it's late enough that no regrowth will occur? Conversely, if there's a need for additional forage and feed replacement prices are high, the gamble often is justified.

Mike Rankin (excerpt from Hay and Forage Grower Magazine, subscribe to Hay and Forage Grower and eHay weekly at [www.hayandforage.com](http://www.hayandforage.com))

### Upcoming Events (details at Forage Website)

- SEPT 17 KFGC Field Day in Christian County.
- SEPT 19 One Day Grazing School –Russell/Clinton County
- NOV 20-24 International Grassland Cong. New Delhi, India.
- DEC 13-16 National Grazing Lands Coalition Conference (GLCI). Grapevine, TX.

### 2016

- JAN 10-12 AFGC Annual Meeting. Baton Rouge, LA.
- JAN 25-26 Heart of American Grazing Conf., Lexington, KY.