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Forage News

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## Forage News [2014-09]

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky

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# FORAGE NEWS

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

## September 2014

*Garry D. Lacefield and S. Ray Smith, Extension Forage Specialists • Christi Forsythe, Secretary*

### BEEF BASH 2014

The 4<sup>th</sup> biennial Beef Bash will be September 25<sup>th</sup> at the U.K. Research and Education Center in Princeton beginning at 9:00 a.m. CST. As in the past we have lots of demonstrations along with commercial and educational exhibits. There will be 8 tour stops that will run from 9:00am to 3:00pm. At noon everyone will meet under the big tent to enjoy lunch where we will have 2 speakers, Dean Nancy Cox and John Paterson, NCBA Executive Director of Producer Education. Throughout the day we will be giving away door prizes. At the field day you will have opportunities for hands-on activities and, of course, the chance to visit with other Kentucky beef cattle producers, UK personnel and administration as well as KCA staff and leadership. (SOURCE: Blair Knight, UK Beef Extension Associate)

### ADVANCED KY GRAZING SCHOOL AT EDEN SHALE

The University of Kentucky will be having a one-day advanced grazing school at the Eden Shale farm in Owenton, KY on September 11, 2014. UK will be teaming up with the Kentucky Cattleman's Association and Kentucky Beef Network to host this event. The address for the Eden Shale farm is 245 Eden Shale Road, Owenton KY, 40359. The advanced grazing school is designed to provide participants in-field learning opportunities and see forage management and grazing systems first hand. Registration will begin at 8:30 a.m. and the Grazing program will be over at 4:00 p.m. The registration fee for this program is \$15.00 and lunch and refreshments will be provided. The registration deadline is September 4<sup>th</sup>. For more information or to register please contact Master Grazer Coordinator Cody Smith at (859) 257-7512 or [Cody.smith@uky.edu](mailto:Cody.smith@uky.edu) (SOURCE: Cody Smith, Extension Associate, University of Kentucky)

### 15<sup>TH</sup> KENTUCKY GRAZING CONFERENCE

The 15<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference will be held October 23, 2014 from 8:00 – 3:00 CST at the Western Kentucky University Expo Center in Bowling Green. Registration is \$15.00 (\$5.00 students) (payable at the door, no preregistration required) and includes meal, break, proceedings, silent auction and exhibits. Our keynote speakers are Mr. Ed Ballard, University of Illinois, and Dr. Scott Flynn, Dow AgroSciences. Registration begins at 8:00 CST:

- 8:00 Registration, Visit Exhibits, Silent Auction
- 8:45 Welcome
- 9:00 Grazing Methods: Tool or Toolbox? – Dr. Garry Lacefield
- 9:15 Maximizing Stocker Gains on Pastures – Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler
- 9:30 Role and Importance of Forage Legumes in Pastures – Dr. Ben Goff
- 9:45 Break
- 10:15 Technical Service Provider: What is it and Why is it important to you? – Mr. Bill Payne
- 10:30 Summer Grazing Options – Dr. Ray Smith
- 11:00 Grazing Options for Fall and Winter – Mr. Ed Ballard

- 11:45 Discussion
- 12:00 Lunch and Awards
- 1:00 Silent Auction Results
- 1:15 Can I Afford to Spray for Weeds in Pastures – Dr. Scott Flynn
- 1:45 Forage Spokesman Contest
- 3:00 Adjourn

### FORAGE QUOTES AND CONCEPTS: NEW BOOK OFFERS FRESH APPROACH TO FORAGE-LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Four Oregon forage seed commissions have released a book on forage and livestock that entertains as well as educates.

Written by five leading forage experts, *Forage-Livestock Quotes and Concepts* contains thoughtful insights on life in general housed in quotes from ancient philosophers, baseball players and extension specialists all used to illustrate forage-livestock concepts.

Among the quoted are former New York Yankee catcher and manager Yogi Berra ("You can observe a lot just by watching."); American novelist Mark Twain ("Climate is what we expect. Weather is what we get."); Albert Einstein ("Information is not knowledge."); and Sophocles ("Success is dependent on effort.")

Don Ball, professor emeritus at Auburn University, said he and University of Kentucky forage specialist Garry Lacefield collected quotes for at least five years in preparing to write the book.

"In essence, we and our co-authors tried to identify concepts that we think are very important or questions that come up frequently, and then we matched quotes and concepts," Ball said.

"The concept is really the most important thing," Ball said. "The premise is if we have a quote to go with the concept, then maybe it will help people to remember the concept."

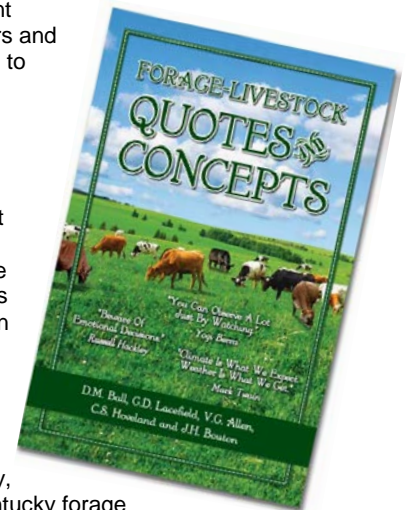
The 72-page book includes chapters on soils and plant fertility, seed and stand establishment, economics and profitability, forage quality, grazing management and others

In addition to Ball and Lacefield, former Texas Tech University professor Vivien Allen, and former University of Georgia professors Joe Bouton and Carl Hoveland co-authored the book.

The book was commissioned and published by the Oregon Ryegrass Commission, the Oregon Tall Fescue Commission, the Oregon Clover Commission and the Oregon Orchardgrass Commission.

The book is available by going to [www.foragequotebook.com](http://www.foragequotebook.com) or by calling 503-364-2944.

(SOURCE: News Release, August 12, 2014)



## U.S. RANKING IN CATTLE

There are approximately 1,033,520,000 head of cattle in the World. The U.S. ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in total cattle numbers.

Rank	Country	% of World
1	India	31.90
2	Brazil	20.12
3	China	10.08
4	European Union	8.51
5	United States	8.49

The world's cattle inventory has grown every year for the past five years.

Ninety-one percent (91%) of the world's cattle are NOT in the U.S. Fifty-two percent are in India and Brazil.

The United States had the second largest cattle inventory in the world until 1978. Brazil took over 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1979.

The U.S. had the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest until 1988 when China took over that spot. (SOURCE: *Adapted from Alabama Cattleman magazine, August 2014*)

## U.S. ALFALFA PRODUCTION TO GROW BY 11% IN 2014, USDA REPORTS

This year's alfalfa-hay crop looks to be one of the most robust on record, according to USDA's Crop Production report released Aug. 12.

An increase of 11% – or more than 6 million tons of alfalfa and alfalfa-mixed dry hay – is expected to be produced this year, the national forecast indicates. That's a total of 63.6 million tons compared to the 57.6 million tons grown in 2013.

Average yield is estimated at 3.5 tons/acre, an increase of a quarter of a ton per acre over last year's total. If the yield estimate holds true, it will be the second highest ever, slightly behind the 3.51 ton/acre average recorded in 1999. (SOURCE: *Jeff Holmquist, Editor, eHay Weekly, August 19, 2014*)

## GRAZING DROUGHT STRESSED CORN STALKS

Some farmers are beginning to graze drought stressed corn stalks and are encountering nitrate toxicity problems. Remember that nitrate accumulates in the stalk and is more concentrated in the lower stalk than the leaves and upper stalk.

If forage and grain yield was reduced by more than 50% (even in spots of the field), stalks should be tested for nitrate before grazing. Some corn stalks have been found with toxic levels of nitrate.

If a test comes back with toxic levels are nitrate, what are the options?

- 1) Nitrate is soluble and some will wash out of the leaves and stalk with heavy rains. Consider that rains greater than 1 inch will likely reduce nitrate to some extent. Forage should again be tested after the rain event to determine nitrate levels remaining. Thus waiting to graze corn stalks may reduce the problem.
- 2) Corn stalks with toxic levels should be diluted with other feeds to reduce the nitrate intake:
  - a. Feeding a supplement, such as corn, can reduce the nitrate concentration and provide energy so that nitrite can be metabolized to some extent.
  - b. Limit feed the corn stalks, for example, allowing grazing only 2 to 4 hours per day (time depending on nitrate level), so that animals consume sufficient hay, other crop residue, or silage to dilute the nitrate.

Knowing the nitrate level of the feedstuff is crucial before feeding to cattle. We tend to think of animal deaths from nitrate (nitrite actually) and many will think if no animals died they got by.

However, subclinical nitrite poisoning can also cause considerable damage to animals. Prolonged exposure to nitrate/nitrite at subclinical levels may cause degeneration of the vascular tissues of the brain and other organs such as lungs, heart, liver, kidneys and testes. The affected animals may appear to be in normal health, but will abort their young, fail to settle to service, suffer a decline in lactation or lack ability to adjust to cold temperatures.

Thyroid function is also impaired by nitrate causing a decrease in iodine uptake by the thyroid gland. Fortunately, iodized salt contains enough iodine to counteract levels of nitrate that would reduce uptake but not show any other signs of poisoning. Be sure to have iodized salt blocks available to cattle grazing corn stalks this year.

Corn stalks have long been grazed for beef cattle and dairy heifers and dry cows. It is a good feed; however this year special attention must be paid to nitrate levels of the corn stalks so that animals do not suffer from acute (death) or subacute toxicity.

(SOURCE: *Dan Undersander, Extension Agronomist, University of Wisconsin*)

## STRATEGIES TO DEAL WITH HAY SHORTAGES


Many farms in Kentucky had reduced hay production in 2014. For grass hay fields, much of this was due to the long winter and short spring growing season. In addition, dry weather further reduced hay yields for many farmers. Here are a few practical solutions for dealing with low hay supplies.

The first priority is to assess your current hay supply and have your hay tested. The Kentucky Department of Agriculture hay testing program is only \$10.00 (which includes sampling the hay) or there are a number of commercial labs where you can submit hay samples. Once you know the hay quality on your farm then you will be able to balance a ration that may include commodity feeds. Without a hay test, you are only guessing. Also if you are buying hay, insist on a hay test. It's better to put your money into commodity feeds and limit hay than to feed hay with low nutritional value. There are many ways to limit hay intake, here are just a few. Only unroll a portion of a hay bale by unrolling enough for one day at a time. Another way is to use corral feeding where the herd only has access to hay for a portion of the day. To dramatically reduce wastage, use the new "hay saver" versions of round bale feeders. Small grains can be a valuable source of fall grazing. Plant wheat, cereal rye or oats for grazing in early September rather than waiting until late fall when grain fields are planted. The wheat and cereal rye will grow back the following spring for additional grazing or round bale silage. The advantage to rye is the ability to graze 4-6 weeks after planting with adequate moisture and the advantage to wheat is higher quality when harvested for silage in the spring. Winter oats provide good fall production and spring growth, but they do not always survive winters in Kentucky. A practice common in Ohio is to seed spring oats in late August/early September and then graze them as standing forage in November and December.

One of the easiest and best ways to stretch out hay supplies is to stockpile tall fescue. Many use and are familiar with this practice. This fall is shaping up to be an excellent fall for stockpiling with improved rainfall patterns around most of the state and moderating temperatures. Simply graze or cut selected fields containing primarily tall fescue by September 15th, apply 50-80 lbs/acre of actual nitrogen (and other needed fertilizers), and strip graze cattle on highly nutritious forage starting in November and grazing through March.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- SEPT 18-20 National Hay Association Annual Convention, Memphis, TN
- SEPT 22-27 Mountain Ag Week, UK Robinson Center, Jackson
- SEPT 25 Beef Bash, U.K. Research & Education Center, Princeton
- OCT 23 15<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference, Western Kentucky University Expo Center, Bowling Green
- NOV 18-20 Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar, Bloomington, MN
- 2015**
- JAN 11-13 American Forage & Grassland Council Conference, St. Louis, MO
- JAN 16-17 20<sup>th</sup> Forages at KCA, KCA Convention, Owensboro
- FEB 26 35<sup>th</sup> "Anniversary" Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center, Cave City, KY

  
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September 2014