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Forage News

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3-1-2014

## Forage News [2014-03]

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky

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### Repository Citation

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky, "Forage News [2014-03]" (2014). *Forage News*. 48.

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# FORAGE NEWS

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

## March 2014

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

### MEETINGS, FRIENDS, AND MARCH 1

I am so glad to have February behind me. WOW, has it been busy. I sure enjoyed meeting with so many of you at County meetings, National Cattlemen Beef Association, Farm Machinery Show, Extension Conference, 2013 Australian Tour group recap meeting, February is always busy but this one has been intense. It's always good to be able to visit with so many of you and catch up on all the news and of course discuss FORAGE. My personal "highlight" was a medical procedure revealing that I am "Cancer Free". Yes, I was diagnosed with bladder cancer in October, went through "surgery" (out-patient), and had six follow-up treatments and a scope procedure a month ago. I am very thankful, extremely blessed to have caught it in its earliest stage and have excellent medical care. The entire process did not slow me down; I did not have to cancel a single meeting or event thanks to the professionalism and patience of a wonderful doctor and his staff. I greatly appreciate my family and friends for their support and prayers.

### SOUTHERN FORAGE AUTHORS MAKE SURPRISE VISIT AT 34<sup>TH</sup> KENTUCKY ALFALFA CONFERENCE

During the final session of the 34<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, I looked as the doors opened in the back of the arena and Forage legends, Southern Forages co-authors and International Forage Experts Dr. Carl Hoveland University of Georgia (Retired) and Dr. Don Ball, Auburn University Extension Specialist (Retired) walked in. Dr. Ball had driven from Auburn and picked Dr. Hoveland up at the Nashville Airport. They were in town at the invitation of the Agriculture Department at Western Kentucky University. They were scheduled to present a seminar to WKU faculty, staff and students and present their new book "Southern Forages Spanish Edition" to the WKU Alumni Library. It was a special moment and reunion for the three authors, colleagues and very special friends.

### 34<sup>TH</sup> KENTUCKY ALFALFA CONFERENCE

Over 170 from at least 8 states participated in the Alfalfa Conference held February 20, 2014 at Western Kentucky University Expo Center in Bowling Green. Participants visited with exhibitors, bid on silent auction items, heard excellent, very practical presentations on alfalfa establishment, production, harvesting, and marketing and enjoyed a great lunch. Alfalfa Awards were presented which include: Monthly alfalfa and alfalfa-grass quality and annual highest quality award, Hay Contest Awards and the Annual Public Service to Alfalfa Awards. At the conclusion of the conference dates and location for the 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kentucky Alfalfa Conference were announced:

**35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Kentucky Alfalfa Conference**

**February 26, 2015**

**Cave City Convention Center**

**Cave City, Kentucky**

Mark your calendars.

See photo highlights on our website at

<http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/ProceedingsPage.htm>

### KENTUCKY ALFALFA AWARDS

The Kentucky Alfalfa Awards program was initiated in 2000 at the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference. The awards program is funded from revenue generated each year from the Silent Auction. Awards include the Warren Thompson Industry Award, Charles Schnitzler Producer Award and the Garry Lacefield Public Service Award. The 2014

recipients were presented at the 34<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference February 20, 2014 at the Western Kentucky University Expo Center in Bowling Green. Recipients include:

Industry – Mr. Don Eckhoff

Producer – Mr. Christopher Gerald

Public – Dr. Elmer Gray

Congratulations Dr. Gray, Christopher and Don.

For a list of previous recipients, visit our website at

<http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/ProceedingsPage.htm>



Don Eckhoff, Christopher Gerald, Elmer Gray and Garry Lacefield.

### HAY "EVALUATION" CONTEST

The Annual hay contest held at the 34<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference was very popular with participants having the opportunity to evaluate four lots of hay with varying qualities. The top three guessing the closest to the tested Relative Feed Value and Crude Protein were:

1<sup>st</sup> Place – Elmer Yoder

2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Julian Miller

3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Joe Hobbs

Congratulations to Elmer, Julian, and Joe and our thanks to all who participated.

My thanks to Mr. Clayton Gerald assisted by Christopher Gerald and Tony Chapman who furnished the hay and administered the contest. Mr. Clayton Gerald presented plaques to winners. Thanks to Clayton and his committee for taking care of all details.



Garry Lacefield, Joe Hobbs, Julian Miller, Elmer Yoder, Clayton Gerald.

## REGISTER NOW FOR THE KENTUCKY SPRING GRAZING SCHOOL

The spring Kentucky Grazing School will be held at the Woodford County Extension Office and C. Oran Little Research Center in Versailles May 21-22, 2014. It is co-sponsored by Master Grazer Educational Program, Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund, U.K. College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Kentucky Forage & Grassland Council. This two day program features the latest, practical information on "grazing" with both classroom and field activities. Registration is \$50 and includes all handout materials, grazing manual, breaks and lunch both days. The class is limited to the first 45 to sign up. To register make checks payable to the Kentucky Forage & Grassland Council and send to Jeff Lehmkuhler, 804 W.P. Garrigus Building, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546-0215. For more information contact Jeff at 859-257-2853, e-mail [jeff.lehmkuhler@uky.edu](mailto:jeff.lehmkuhler@uky.edu). See <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage> for the program.

### HAY AWARDS

Each year the Kentucky Department of Agriculture test thousands of hay samples for quality. At the 34<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference the highest testing alfalfa and alfalfa-grass samples tested each month were presented by Hay Testing Coordinator Ms. Kim Fields. Award winners include:

Month	Alfalfa	Alfalfa-Grass
March	No participant	No participant
April	No participant	No participant
May	Cox Farms, Inc.	Mark Thomas
June	John McCoy	Joe Hobbs
July	John McCoy	Geralds Farms
August	John McCoy	Geralds Farms
September	Ben Cox	Geralds Farms
October	No participant	No participant
November	Dennis Wright	No participant

Overall highest quality for the 2013 haying season was Ben Cox.

Congratulations to all the winners and good luck for the 2014 haying season.

### NEW PROGRAM AVAILABLE: GRAZING FOR CASH

Back in August of 2012, several industry leaders, agents and specialists attended the Beef Industry Leadership Conference in Asheville, North Carolina. Preceding this conference, a producer survey was conducted regarding current practices within Kentucky's beef industry. These results were compared to those from the previous leadership conference a decade earlier. Some things had changed while others remained fairly similar.

During the conference, participants discussed the industry issues identified and developed action plans to address each of these issues. Land competition arose as one of the top five issues. As part of this action plan, the need to increase the efficiency of pasture/forage acres was suggested. Immediately after the conference, this information was discussed and an educational program was developed to address this issue by the University of Kentucky faculty members that co-coordinate the Master Grazer program.

One of the first steps in developing this educational program was a survey of the UK county Extension Agricultural agents. The survey was aimed at gaining insight from agents pertaining to on-farm demonstrations that would be beneficial for their producers related to grazing management. Weed control and stockpile grazing of tall fescue were the two identified by agents most often. This information was used to develop educational programs that might help move past increasing cattle producers' basic knowledge of a topic and help them implement management changes.

Agents, specialists and Dan Miller, KBN Industry Coordinator, next took a trip to Arkansas to learn more details on University of Arkansas' "300 Days of Grazing" educational program. During the trip, the group was hosted by Dr. John Jennings, forage Extension specialist and Kenny Simon, forage program associate. Several farms were visited that implemented changes to their grazing management. For some it was the use of annual forages while others began to rotationally graze. The use of clover to improve forage quality and stand productivity was adapted by some farms as well. These practices were not new; yet, the program was working closely with the operations to help them implement the grazing practices that would help them lower their dependence on stored and purchased feeds.

The Kentucky Graze 300 program, as it was originally referred to, began taking shape as a result of this trip. The program objectives were and still are to increase producers' awareness of practices that could help them manage their land, livestock and labor resources in a manner that enhances their grazing program. The intent is to increase

the number of grazing days to 300 days or more as economic considerations allow. In some situations, it may not be economically advantageous to strive for grazing 300 days and focus more on utilizing stored feeds more effectively. For this reason, the program was given the name Grazing for Cash.

The Grazing for Cash program's focus is on improving grazing and forage management. To help producers implement change, steps to incorporate and prioritize the identified focus areas are defined. The initial areas of focus include weed control, stockpiling tall fescue, implementing a managed grazing system, and improving pastures by seeding clovers. Additional areas include hay waste, creep grazing, use of winter annuals, and forages to fill the summer gap. Producers can work with their county agent and/or facilitator to prioritize focal areas and decide which management strategy can be implemented on their farm.

As the program is rolled out in early 2014, watch for announcements of Grazing for Cash meetings to learn more about how you can improve your land, labor and forage resources to help work through the increased land competition issue facing the industry and improve forage utilization on your operation. (SOURCE: *Grazing News, Volume 4, Issue 1, February 2014*)

### MIDWEST COVER CROP COUNCIL - COVER CROP DECISION TOOL

I recently had the pleasure of being on a Certified Crop Advisor program with a long time friend Mr. Mike Plummer. Mike is a retired University of Illinois specialist and has been a leader in Cover Crop Research & Extension. He is now working with the Midwest Cover Crop Council. I have looked to Mike for information over the years and he shared a new Cover Crop Decision Tool for the Midwest. Although Kentucky is not included, I found the site very informative and used criteria in Illinois, Ohio and Indiana to get more information relative to Kentucky. If you are interested in any aspect, I suggest you look on our website, or you can just Google Midwest Cover Crops. The link on our website is under Forage Decision Aids is <http://www.mccc.msu.edu/>.

### IS AN ACREAGE COMEBACK LOOMING FOR ALFALFA?

#### U.S. SEEDINGS ROSE BY 5% IN 2013, USDA REPORTS

New U.S. seedings of alfalfa and alfalfa mixtures increased by 5% last year over the 2.39 million acres planted in 2012. It was the second year in a row to see an increase, even though it's the third-lowest total of newly seeded acres on record, according to the [2013 Crop Production Summary](#) released by USDA in early January.

Still, the back-to-back years of gains represent good news for the hay and forage sector, says Matt Diersen, ag economist with South Dakota State University.

"Nationwide, we had 2.5 million new acres planted in 2013," says Diersen. "That tells me we could be coming off the bottom for really low, harvested (alfalfa) acres. Any way you look at it, that's a good thing. Without some additional acres, we're going to have continued swings in supplies and prices and more volatility in the market. This, at least, is a move in the right direction."

Also, U.S. hay production rebounded last year from the extremely low levels of 2012. Growers produced 136 million tons of all hay in 2013, up 13% from the previous year's total, USDA reports. Area harvested was estimated at 58.3 million acres, up 4% from that harvested last year. The average yield, at 2.33 tons/acre, was up 0.20 ton from the previous year's average yield.

For alfalfa, USDA estimated 2013 production at 57.6 million tons, up 11% from 2012 production. Harvested area, at 17.8 million acres, was 3% higher than in 2012, while average yield was estimated at 3.24 tons/acre, up 0.23 ton. (SOURCE: eHay Weekly, Hay & Forage Grower, Jan. 31, 2014)

### HAY TESTING

We have added the Kentucky Department of Agriculture Hay Testing brochure to our website at <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/> click on the purple button in the center column.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY 21-22 Kentucky Grazing School, Woodford County Extension Office, Versailles

SEPT 22-27 Mountain Ag Week, UK Robinson Center, Jackson

2014

FEB 26 35<sup>th</sup> "Anniversary" Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center, Cave City, KY

Garry D. Lacefield  
Extension Forage Specialist  
March 2014