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FORAGE NEWS

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

January 2013

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

DR. JIMMY HENNING TO OPEN AFGC CONFERENCE

The American Forage & Grassland Council's Annual Meeting will be January 6-9, 2013 at the Marriott River Center in Covington, Kentucky. The Opening Session will cover the theme "Forage Research-Teaching-Extension: Challenges and Opportunities". Leading off the program will be Dr. Jimmy Henning, University of Kentucky. Also featured on this important program will be Dr. Neal Martin, Director, Dairy-Forage Research Center, Madison, Wisconsin; Dr. Joe Bouton, Professor Emeritus, University of Georgia; and V. Mac Baldwin, Beef-Forage producer from North Carolina. For details on the entire conference visit www.afgc.org

FORAGES AT KCA

Forages at KCA will feature three presentations including: Forages: Change-Challenge-Opportunities, Opportunities for Grassfed-beef in Kentucky and Beef: The REAL Health Food. The program will be held in conjunction with the Kentucky Cattlemen's Convention Friday, January 11 beginning at 1:15 p.m. at the Lexington Convention Center.

HEART OF AMERICA GRAZING CONFERENCE

The 12th HOAGC will be held in Springfield, Missouri February 25-26 at the University Plaza Hotel. This year's Conference is being held in conjunction with the 29th Annual SW Missouri Spring Forage Conference with an expanded program, cutting edge topics and outstanding speakers. For program details and registration information visit our website <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/2013%20SFC-HofAm%20Registration-Agenda.pdf>

2012 U.K. FORAGE VARIETY RESULTS

My thanks to Gene Olson for burning the "midnight oil" to get all the forage variety tests from 2012 summarized. Thanks also to Christi Forsythe for getting them on our Forage Website. See <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/ForageVarietyTrials2.htm> for details. Making wise decisions on variety selection can make a critical difference in yield, persistence and profitability.

MISSOURI FARMERS FIGHT RISE IN HAY THEFTS

As if it's not bad enough that Missouri farmers are trying to survive the worst drought in decades, now many of them are facing a new problem that's costing them big bucks.

Missouri Farm Bureau president Blake Hurst says thieves are actually targeting those big bundles of hay that are left out in fields prior to being harvested, hauling them off and selling the valuable commodity.

"Of course, no one brands their hay so if you hook onto it with your tractor or your pickup and make it out the gate, then it's impossible to prove where the hay came from," Hurst said.

With winter approaching and grass dying out, the price for fresh hay to feed livestock is on the rise, and Hurst says that makes unguarded bales a tempting target.

Ironically, it's because of the ongoing drought that fresh hay has become so valuable with the winter season fast approaching.

And it's not just Missouri. This trend is happening in farm states across the country, so much so that some are now putting global positioning trackers inside their bales, in case they're stolen. (SOURCE: CBS KMOX Radio, ST. LOUIS – Dec. 3, 2012)

"BEEF: THE REAL HEALTH FOOD"

Editor's Note: Dr. Peter Ballerstedt will be the Keynote Speaker at the Forages at KCA Program in Lexington on January 11. His topic is "Beef: The Real Health Food". Below is a brief summary of his presentation:

The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends restricting our intake of saturated fat to less than 7 percent of calories, and our cholesterol intake to less than 300 mg per day (less than two eggs). They promote the use of low-fat milk and lean meat, and the use of "meat substitutes" in school lunches. These recommendations are consistent with the official dietary policy that began in 1977 with the release of the first Dietary Goals for the United States by the United States Senate Select Committee on Nutrition and Human Needs. These guidelines were not justified by the then-available science. They were adopted despite the concerns of researchers and physicians. Subsequent research has disproven the hypothesis upon which they were based. They have failed to produce the promised benefits. Since animal products are a significant source of saturated fat and cholesterol, the official advice has been to limit the consumption of animal products in general and red meat in particular. At best animal products have been wrongly accused and unfairly impacted by public policy; at worst vast physical and fiscal harm has been done to the American public. (Source: Dr. Peter Ballerstedt. IN KFGC Special Publication 2013-1, Lexington, Ky. January 2013)

MORE VALUE FROM PASTURES IN 2013

Forages have played a critical role in Kentucky historically, interest and opportunities are the highest I have seen in my career; however, the most important role for forages and indeed grazing is the Future. We can produce quality animal products with quality forages. We will not have the luxury of substituting cheap energy and proteins for low quality forages. The good news is we don't have too. More producers are recognizing the value of forage quality, factors affecting quality and management required to achieve an acceptable quality to meet desired animal performance results. Get more VALUE from your pasture:

Vegetative – use appropriate grazing strategies to graze pastures in a leafy stage for best quality and animal performance.

Availability – strive through appropriate grazing management to keep pasture "available" at the right stage of growth (quality) so intake will be high followed by good animal performance.

Legumes – to achieve improved yields, better quality, more summer production and for "home-grown" nitrogen, legumes must play a greater role in Kentucky's forage-livestock programs.

Utilization – one of our greatest opportunities in pasture based animal agriculture is to use our pastures better. With some form of rotational grazing, we can use more of what we produce (waste less) use in higher quality stage (better animal performance) and use over more days of the year (less hay/baleage – more profit).

Efficiency – Good genetics – healthy animals capable of utilizing forage efficiency make good forage programs better.

RENOVATION: MORE IMPORTANT IN 2013

Pasture renovation (establishing clovers in grass pasture/hay fields) is more important this year than ever. First, the need for higher quality forages is at an all time high as the opportunity to substitute cheap grain and soybean meal for poor quality forages is history, nitrogen prices continue to increase resulting in a greater incentive to "grow our own with legumes", and third – weather. Weather over the past few years has resulted in fewer acres seeded with legumes and lack of moisture, overgrazing, etc. has weakened pastures too lower legume percentage. A key during January is to decide which clovers you will seed (red or white) and critically important which variety. Gene Olson has the 2012 Clover Varieties Tests summarized and available in hard copy or on our website. I just looked at the three year total yield of the nine varieties in the test across three locations. Average yield from lowest to highest was 3.34 tons of dry matter per acre per year. How much clover seed could we buy by selling as hay/beef/milk 3.4 tons of quality dry matter each year? Good varieties don't cost, they PAY.

PERENNIAL FORAGES BENEFIT SOILS, OTHER CROPS, AND WATER QUALITY IN IMPORTANT WAYS

One of the most important economic reasons to incorporate perennial forages into a rotation is the nitrogen (N) credit for the crop following the forage. Nitrogen released from decomposing alfalfa tissue and from newly accumulated soil organic matter can supply most or the entire N requirement of a following corn crop (Fig. 1).

Estimates of fertilizer N credit vary depending on the forage species, the quality of the stand (Fig. 2), and the amount of regrowth. For example, University of Wisconsin recommends an additional first-year N credit of 40 lb/acre when 8 inches or more regrowth is incorporated. In addition, first-year corn grown after alfalfa may have 10 to 15% higher yield potential due to factors other than N supply ("rotation effect" in Fig. 1), including improved soil tilth and fewer pest problems. Because of lower insect pressure, additional savings can be had in seed or insecticide with corn rotated after a perennial forage.

(SOURCE: U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center Fact Sheet, www.ars.usda.gov/mwa/madison/dfrc)

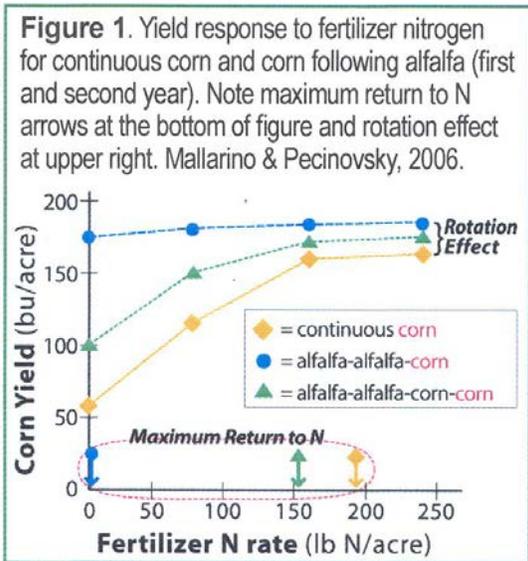


Figure 1. Yield response to fertilizer nitrogen for continuous corn and corn following alfalfa (first and second year). Note maximum return to N arrows at the bottom of figure and rotation effect at upper right. Mallarino & Pecinovsky, 2006.

Figure 2. Value of fertilizer nitrogen credits when alfalfa is grown the previous year.

Stand Density	N Credits (lb/acre)	Value* of N Credits \$/acre
Good	130	\$104
Fair	100	\$80
Poor	70	\$56

*With nitrogen at \$0.80/lb.

JBS TO BEEF UP PRODUCTION FROM GRASS-FED BRAZIL

HERD - SIX NEW PLANTS TO BOOST SLAUGHTER CAPACITY BY JULY 2013

SAO PAULO, Nov 14 (Reuters) - JBS SA, the world's biggest meat company, is betting on Brazil's grass-fed beef industry to win global market share as high grain prices squeeze production in other countries.

In the coming months, the family-run company will open six additional slaughterhouses that will increase its beef production capacity in Brazil by 15 percent, Chief Executive Wesley Batista said on Wednesday.

The company slaughters nearly 12 million of the 40 million head of cattle that Brazil kills annually.

Analysts expect Brazil's grass-fed beef industry to gain market share as other global beef producers, such as the United States, Europe and Australia, reduce the reproductive potential of their herds due to high feed costs after the recent drought in the United States farm belt.

The six additional plants will increase processing capacity by 1.2 million head of cattle by July 2013, head of investor relations Jerry O'Callaghan said on a conference call to discuss the company's third-quarter earnings.

As the plants reach full production toward the end of 2013, they will be able to process up to 2 million head a year. Three of the plants will be new and three inactive ones, acquired with JBS's takeover of rival meatpacker Independencia, will be reopened.

In April, JBS snapped up Independencia, once one of Brazil's biggest meatpackers, at a cut-rate price while it was in bankruptcy -- a victim of the 2008 financial crisis.

"This expansion will cost very little. They are units that we already have and are going to direct to the local and foreign markets," Batista said during a conference call with analysts.

JBS posted a quarterly profit of 367 million reais (\$178 million) late on Tuesday, recovering from a quarterly loss of 68 million reais a year earlier thanks to its strong beef business in Brazil.

Batista said the company was quickly reducing its leverage, or debt to earnings, with the improving reproductive cycle of the Brazilian cattle herd and a weaker Brazilian real against the dollar.

"The cost of raising an animal in the United States is twice the cost of raising an animal in Brazil. So, they are reducing the size of their herd," Batista said, adding that the outlook for Brazilian beef production was extremely positive.

Batista said he expects a favorable cycle for the company's Brazil operations until 2015 as the number of cattle available for slaughter grows. The country has the world's biggest commercial herd of more than 200 million head.

"Business in Brazil is more attractive than abroad. We are increasing production in the place that offers the best returns," Batista said.

Company shares rose 3 percent in early trade on Wednesday in Sao Paulo, but later fell back to close down 3 percent, in line with the Bovespa index as stocks reacted to generalized strikes in Europe and weaker Brazilian economic data. (SOURCE: Fabiola Gomes and Reese Ewing, Reuters, Nov. 14, 2012)

UPCOMING EVENTS

2013

- JAN 6-8 AFGC Annual Conference, Marriott River Center Covington, KY
- JAN 11 Forages at KCA, KCA Annual Convention, Lexington Convention Center, Lexington
- FEB 2 Kentucky Small Ruminant Grazing Conference, Morehead State University Farm, Morehead
- FEB 21 33rd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Fayette County Extension Office, Lexington
- FEB 25-26 29th Annual SW Missouri Spring Forage Conference & 12th Annual Heart of America Grazing Conference

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