



University of Kentucky
UKnowledge

Forage News

Plant and Soil Sciences

6-1-2012

Forage News [2012-06]

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky

Follow this and additional works at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/forage_news



Part of the [Plant Sciences Commons](#)

[Right click to open a feedback form in a new tab to let us know how this document benefits you.](#)

Repository Citation

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky, "Forage News [2012-06]" (2012). *Forage News*. 69.

https://uknowledge.uky.edu/forage_news/69

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the Plant and Soil Sciences at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Forage News by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.



FORAGE NEWS

Research & Education Center
Princeton, KY 42445

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

June 2012

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

ADVANCED GRAZING SCHOOL

An Advanced Grazing School will be held at the C. Oran Little Research Center, Versailles, Kentucky July 10, 2012.

8:30 Registration

Strip Grazing and Livestock Management

Dr. Donna Amaral-Phillips

Health Considerations for the Grazing Ruminant

Dr. Michelle Arnold

Summer Annual Forage Options

Dr. Ray Smith

Grazing Corn and Bermudagrass

Dr. Eric Vanzant

Lunch

Benefits of New Tall Fescue Varieties

Dr. Garry Lacefield

Management Tools for Tall Fescue

Dr. Glen Aiken

Benefits and Limitations of Herbicide Use in Pastures

Dr. JD Green

Ultra High Density Grazing

Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler and Dr. Ray Smith

4:00 Final Discussion

4:30 Adjourn

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. Program includes:

Registration is \$20.00 which includes all materials, breaks and lunch. For more information, contact Lindsay Jones, lyndsay.jones4@uky.edu phone 859-257-7512. Program and registration information is on the Forage website at <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/Advanced%20Grazing%20School%20Program.pdf>

MEASURING THE MOISTURE CONTENT OF FORAGE USING A MICROWAVE OVEN

1. Chop fresh forage into short lengths (< 1 inch) for ease of handling and uniform drying.
2. Weigh out at least 100 grams (3.5 ounces) of chopped forage.
3. Spread forage thinly on a microwave-safe dish and place into microwave. (A cup of water placed in the microwave beside the sample will help prevent the sample from igniting once dry.)
4. Heat for 1-2 minutes and reweigh.
 - If forage is not completely dry, shake and redistribute the sample, and repeat the heating cycle until the sample reaches a stable weight. (Microwaves vary considerably in drying capacity. It is better to dry for short intervals and reweigh until the last two weights are constant, than to overdry and run the risk of burning and damage to oven.) If charring occurs, use the previous weight.
5. Calculate moisture content using the following equation:

$$\% \text{ Moisture Content} = \frac{W1 - W2}{W1}$$

Where: W1 = weight of forage before heating
W2 = weights of forage after heating

Dry matter (DM) is the percentage of forage that is not water. DM equals 100% minus the % Moisture Content.

Adapted from: Southern Forages 4th Edition, Page 303

THIN ALFALFA PLANTINGS: DECIDING WHEN TO GIVE UP

I have received many phone calls and email messages over the past several weeks expressing concern about new alfalfa seedings being very thin (few plants per square foot). These communications inevitably end with this question "how thin is too thin to keep the seeding?" I have generally said that the bare minimum number of alfalfa plants in a new seeding should be 15 per square foot. If the numbers drop below that threshold then the stand will not yield as well as it could, stand longevity may be compromised and weed competition may be a greater problem. I recently went back to alfalfa studies I've conducted over the past 20 years where the new stands were variable (17 locations/environments) but we kept the plantings and collected data from them.

Unfortunately, 16 alfalfa seedlings per square foot was the lowest density (average of five locations) we collected data from. The new alfalfa seedings with plant densities of 16 alfalfa plants per square foot produced less yield than the greater plant densities only for the 1st harvest in the seeding year (see Table). Subsequent yields were not different between 16 and 60 seedlings per square foot.

Yield of alfalfa with different plant densities 4 weeks after planting.

Plant density 4 weeks after planting Plants per square foot	1st Harvest Yield	Seeding year total yield (% of average)	1st Harvest yield in year after seeding
16	0.91	0.95	0.98
19	0.93	0.96	1.03
21	1.01	1.03	1.00
25	0.98	1.00	0.94
29	1.00	1.02	1.02
35	1.04	1.02	1.00
37	1.00	1.01	1.03
50	1.07	1.04	0.97
60	1.03	1.04	1.02
Least Significant Difference at 0.05	0.04	NS	NS

We also monitored the plant density from these studies for five years and found no difference in stand density after 18 months. Consequently, initially thinner stands of 16 plants per square foot had the same length of stand life as much higher stand densities.

So, if your new alfalfa plantings have 15 or more seedlings per square foot then they are worth keeping! (SOURCE: Marvin Hall, PSU Forage Specialist)

AFGC FORAGE TOUR

The American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC) has started a new initiative with affiliate state forage and grassland councils. Each year a summer forage tour is being held in a different state. This year it was held in Rogers, Arkansas May 17-18. Some of the most interesting tour stops were to bermudagrass hay producers. Bermudagrass is an excellent grass to grow for hay and pastures. One limitation is that it does take high levels of nitrogen. Research by Dr. John Jennings and others at the Univ. of Arkansas has shown that alfalfa can be planted into stands of improved bermudagrass varieties. We saw this on several farmer fields and it was amazing to see how alfalfa can compete with bermudagrass.

The key is to establish the alfalfa into the bermudagrass in late summer/early fall. In their case early October, in our case it would be late August or early September (Note: occasionally KY producers have fall planted alfalfa damaged by Sclerotinia). It is essential to mow the bermudagrass down very short once the nights start getting down to 60 degrees, at that point the bermudagrass is really slowing down its growth. Alfalfa can be drilled into the stand, then as the bermudagrass becomes more dormant during the fall the alfalfa continues to establish. The following spring the alfalfa comes up sooner than the bermudagrass, so it's able to grow and flourish. The first cutting of alfalfa is delayed about one week, to keep the bermudagrass suppressed.

The bermudagrass is still there under the canopy, but with the shade suppression, it remains dormant for 2-3 weeks. By that time the alfalfa has grown back to the point where it again starts to shade the bermudagrass. On the tour, we saw an alfalfa stand seeded into bermudagrass that was 7 years old. The interesting thing is the bermudagrass is never is completely shaded out, it remains as a thin stand under the alfalfa canopy. Producers who have used this practice have found that when they decided the alfalfa stand was thinning, they could just spray it out with a broadleaf herbicide and the bermudagrass would come back in.

Although the technique described above has worked for 10 years, many Arkansas producers are now using Roundup Ready alfalfa. The bermudagrass is completely eliminated from the stand, but RR alfalfa can be seeded in the spring into bermudagrass sod. This may be the best option for many KY producers, and using Roundup Ready alfalfa, stands can be established into even aggressive stands of common bermudagrass.

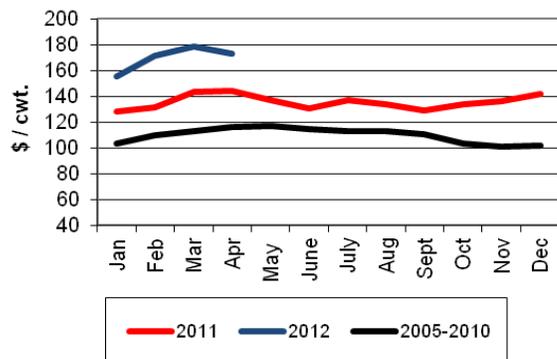
KENTUCKY BEEF CATTLE MARKET UPDATE

Kentucky cattle markets continued to show some signs of softening during April. As of early May, 500 to 600 lbs feeder steers were moving in the low \$170's on a state average basis, which can be seen in the chart below. Groups of heavy feeders (700 to 900 lbs) were generally in the \$130 to \$145 range depending on weight and quality. Both calf markets and feeder cattle markets are off of their March highs. Seasonally, calf prices tend to decrease from spring as we move into summer and fall. Heavier feeders tend to hold stronger through the summer before dropping off in fall. Of course, many factors will be influencing these markets in the coming months beyond seasonal pressure including weather, the progress of the corn crop, and fed cattle prices.

Over the last couple months, there have been two major factors that markets have tried to digest for their implications on demand. The first was the all the discussion surrounding boneless lean beef trimmings. The second was the April 24th announcement of a California dairy cow testing positive for BSE. While it is nearly impossible to deny that the boneless lean beef trimming media attention had some negative impact, the market seems to have largely shrugged off the fourth case of BSE in the US. At the time of this writing, live cattle futures had returned to levels before the announcement and for the most part, feeder cattle futures were at higher levels.

The November feeder cattle futures contract traded around \$163 in early March and moved down about \$10 per cwt over the next five weeks. It has since pushed back up into the low \$160's and may well challenge those contract highs. While it is certainly possible that these markets may put in new highs, from a risk management perspective the market is offering a second chance to lock in fall prices on a board at \$160 plus. Producers may want to consider this as they think about risk management strategies. (SOURCE: Kenny Burdine, Livestock Marketing Specialist, University of Kentucky)

Medium / Large Frame #1 Steers
500 to 600 lbs



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self-centered; Forgive them anyway. If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; Be kind anyway. If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; Succeed anyway. If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; Be honest and frank anyway. What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; Build anyway. If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; Be happy anyway. The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; Do good anyway. Give the world the best you've got anyway. You see, in the final analysis it is between you and God; It was never between you and them anyway.---Mother Teresa

UPCOMING EVENTS

- JUL 10 Advanced Grazing School, C. Oran Little Research Center, Versailles
- SEP 6 KFGC Field Day, Hart County
- SEP 27 UK Beef Bash, U.K. Research & Education Center, Princeton
- OCT 30 Kentucky Grazing Conference, U.K. Research & Education Center, Princeton

2013

- FEB 21 33rd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Fayette County Extension Office, Lexington

Garry D. Lacefield

Garry D. Lacefield
Extension Forage Specialist
June 2012