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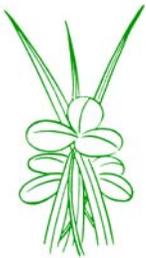
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FORAGE NEWS

Research & Education Center
Princeton, KY 42445

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

April 2012

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

KENTUCKY GRAZING SCHOOL JUST DAYS AWAY

The Spring Kentucky Grazing School will be April 10-11, 2012 at the UKREC in Princeton. It's not too late to sign-up. If interested, contact Grazing School Coordinator Lyndsay Jones at 859-257-7512 or lyndsay.jones@uky.edu. A copy of the Grazing School program is on our website at <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/Princeton%202012%20brochure%20bot h.pdf>

GRAZING SCHOOL GRADUATE FEATURED ON U.K. YOUTUBE

Greg Reynolds, beef producer from Calloway County is one of our "star" Grazing School graduates. He is featured on the following video on the U.K. College of Agriculture YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ywNyPuzcHzE&feature=BFa&list=U UjLmlBb3hAPB927mQmijXxw&f=plcp>

KENTUCKY FORAGES ON YOUTUBE

There is a new forage video on YouTube that had a lot of the footage scenes shot in Kentucky and features three Kentucky producers (Bill Payne, Jim Landis and Clayton Gerald). The YouTube address is <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dCemAgWRbUc> and the title of the video is Keys to Forage Profitability. Four other videos concerning Tall Fescue, Orchardgrass, Ryegrass and Clovers will be posted soon.

KENTUCKY GRAZING CONFERENCE

The 13th Kentucky Grazing Conference will be held at the UKREC in Princeton on October 30. The program committee is already working on the program. More details later. Mark your calendars for October 30 and join us at the 13th Kentucky Grazing Conference.

KENTUCKY ALFALFA CONFERENCE

The 33rd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference will be held at the Fayette County Extension Office on February 21, 2013. The Conference will feature outstanding speakers covering a wide array of practical topics relating to alfalfa establishment, production, harvesting, storing, marketing and feeding. In addition, we expect a large silent auction and a full house of exhibitors.

MASTER GRAZER WEBSITE

Master Grazer Educational Program's website is now live on the web. Check it out at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/grazer>. Previous grazing articles are on this site as well as upcoming dates and programs for pasture walks and grazing schools.

ADVANCED GRAZING SCHOOL

The advanced grazing school will be held on July 10, 2012 at the C. Oran Little Research Center in Woodford County. This one-day event is geared toward those who have attended a previous grazing program. Registration will start at 8:30 AM EDT. There is a \$20.00 registration fee which includes lunch and materials. For more information or to register please contact Lyndsay Jones, 804 W.P. Garrigus Bldg., Lexington, KY 40546-021, (859)257-7512 or at lyndsay.jones4@uky.edu.

GRAZING FOR PROFIT WITH SHEEP

Jim Gerrish will be the featured speaker at the Tennessee Grazing for Profit with Sheep Field Day to be held May 17, 2012 on the Roger Johnson Farm in Hancock County, Tennessee. [Click here](#) for a more detailed program, directions and registration information see the attached.

EXPECT EARLY ALFALFA WEEVIL FEEDING

Degreeday accumulations provide the best way to determine when to check alfalfa fields for tip feeding by alfalfa weevil larvae. The first chance to see damage occurs when 190 dd (base 48 F) have accumulated from Jan 1 of the current year.

Alfalfa weevil degree day totals (1/1 – 3/19)		
Location	2011	2012
Lexington	137	254
Princeton	185	339
Somerset	181	315
Williamstown	107	228

The table above shows the difference in degreeday accumulations between 2011 and 2012 at 4 weather stations around Kentucky. Feeding holes should be evident now as small larvae begin to feed at stem tips. Control is recommended when 25% to 50% of the tips are being fed upon and 2 or more larvae can be found per stem. (SOURCE: Lee Townsend IN Kentucky Pest News, #1295, March 20, 2012)

NEW ECONOMICS FAVOR BETTER FORAGE MANAGEMENT.

IS IT A NEW AGE FOR FORAGE?

If you've felt like it's a different kind of cattle market now, you're now along.

The beef industry is at the beginning of a long-term economic shift, says Dr. Derrell Peel, livestock marketing economist at Oklahoma State University.

"The cattle industry from the 1960s to 2006 was based on cheap grain and chap energy," he says. "Late in 2006, the world began to change."

"Corn prices doubled in a few months. For almost 20 years, corn prices were about \$2 per bushel. The trading range for corn now is twice to three times what it was, and it's basically permanent. Feed is no longer the primary use of corn."

That, coupled with other costs and a recession, caused the industry to cut back herds trying to find a profitable level of production. Then came drought. Cattle numbers now are the lowest since the 1950s.

"This situation with high corn prices and low cattle numbers is the only time like this in history," Peel says. "It's not business as usual."

More Value in Forage – Markets will reward those who produce forage efficiently and use it to put pounds on marketable cattle, whether they be calves or heavy feeders.

"For the foreseeable future, there is more value in forage," Peel says. "For the first time in two generations, we have an incentive to manage forage right."

Of course, in the Southwest, any form of forage has been dear in the drought. Peel acknowledges it may take three to five years for ranches to recover to predrought productivity. Forage specialists will advise extra care for pastures and easing back to predrought herd sizes. The market offers some ways to think about that, Peel says.

Buying back fewer, better-quality cows to stock appropriately may be one option, he suggests.

"Or you could go through one or two turns with stockers first. Stocker gain used to be worth 59 cents (per pound), and now it's \$1.25. You can run 1½ to two stockers per cow unit."

Changing your business model will require some rethinking. But given the long-term changes the industry faces, everyone's will, Peel says. Permanently higher grain prices is a game changer. (SOURCE: *Range & Pasture Steward*. Vol. 9, No. 1, Winter 2012 Fescue Edition)

10 HERBICIDE APPLICATION MISTAKES

Herbicides are an exceptional tool for farmers when used correctly, but like any tool, they can't work if they're not used properly. Here are 10 common mistakes that farmers make when using herbicides.

- 1. Herbicide applied when weeds are too big.** - This is the most common mistake when applying herbicides. Herbicide labels state a range of weed sizes for which the herbicide will be effective and the recommended rates. If you apply postemergence herbicides to weeds that are bigger than what the label states, expect less than complete control.
- 2. Rate of herbicide application is too high.** - In general, the ability to kill weeds or prevent weeds from growing while not damaging desired crops involves the ability of the crop to metabolize or detoxify the herbicide. Under certain conditions, such as overlaps or applications of very high rates, the crop's ability to metabolize or detoxify the herbicide may be overwhelmed. Crop injury often occurs in this situation.
- 3. Herbicide carryover.** - Many herbicides are broken down by microbial action. Anything that affects that activity will slow the breakdown of the herbicide and can lead to carryover and potential injury to subsequent crops if they are sensitive to that herbicide. Drought, low pH, soils with low microbial activity to begin with, and other factors that reduce microbial activity will increase the risk of carryover.
- 4. Effectiveness is lost.** - A herbicide also can have reduced longevity due to increased microbial activity in the soil. Wet, warm soils and leaching rains for extended periods can lead to premature loss of residual activity in herbicides.
- 5. Rate of application is too low.** - Many control problems are due to applying herbicide at a rate that is not high enough. It is important to read the label for soil restrictions and soil recommendations with residual herbicides.
- 6. No water to activate.** - A herbicide that requires water to activate will not work if there is no rainfall or irrigation.
- 7. Weeds are stressed.** - Postemergence herbicides work poorly on weeds that are stressed or are not growing normally. Why? These weeds have partially shut down certain physiological activities so the herbicides may not be taken up or moved to sites of action in the stressed plants.
- 8. Improper adjuvant used.** - Use of proper adjuvants is critical for many postemergence herbicides. Surfactants, oils, and other additives may be necessary for them to work effectively.
- 9. Application equipment mistakes.** - Misapplication or misuse such as improper cleaning of sprayer tanks and lines, using products not labeled for a crop, mixing up herbicides when filling tanks, spraying when conditions are poor, and excessive overlapping are just some of the reasons why a herbicide won't work as intended.
- 10. Poor crop growth.** - Weed control in a crop is often dependent on both the activity of the herbicide and the development of a crop canopy to shade any weeds that might germinate later. Anything that affects the development of a crop canopy can reduce weed control.

(SOURCE: *Farm Industry News*, March 6, 2012)

EVALUATION OF MATURITY OF SWITCHGRASS HAY FOR FEEDING BEEF STEERS IN KENTUCKY

ABSTRACT - Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*) is a native warm season perennial grass which can be harvested as biomass, grazed, or harvested for hay. The use of switchgrass as hay for feeding beef steers can be challenging as feed quality greatly decreases with increasing forage maturity. When harvesting switchgrass hay, it is often recommended to harvest at late boot stage which in turn should result in the best relationship between feed quality and feed quantity. The objective of this study was to evaluate the effect of switchgrass hay maturity on beef steers. In 2010, a preliminary study was conducted in which 2 cultivars of switchgrass hay were harvested at 3

different maturity stages (vegetative, boot, and flowering), then fed to 400-500 lb. beef steers to evaluate apparent digestibility. In 2011, the study was repeated in order to evaluate differences in intake, and apparent digestibility. (SOURCE: *D. Davis, S.R. Smith and B. Pratt, IN 2012 AFGC Proceedings & Abstracts, January 2012*)

IS CHEAP SEED REALLY A GOOD BUY?

Producers are always looking for ways to cut costs, and often the first decision they have to make each year is what seed to buy for the upcoming year's crop. The first inclination of every producer is to shop around and get the "cheapest seed" they can find. However the cheapest seed in the market may not be the most profitable for his operation in the long run. The upfront cost of planting new fields is just one consideration; the ultimate decision of what seed should be purchased must be based on **which seed will provide the most profit at the end of the season.** The value of the seed should be based on the varieties yield potential and if it has the proper pest protection package for the region. Producers may initially save money on the so called "cheaper seed", but in fact end up spending more money throughout the year on additional production costs or lower yields associated with the inferior seed. The cost of one or two additional pesticide applications, or having to replant due to poor stand establishment, suddenly makes that "Cheap Seed" more expensive. **The final hidden cost of "Cheap Seed" is lost yield potential.** The seed choice made at planting time determines the yield potential of that field, which is especially important on perennial crops. Seed costs are often the producer's lowest crop input, and the seed choice at the beginning will often determine the profitability of that crop. Newer higher yielding varieties may cost slightly more, but even a small yield advantage of ½ ton, often than pays for the additional seed cost the very first year, and can result in significantly higher profits over the life of the stand.

Below are a few sample calculations comparing two alfalfa varieties. The old public variety "Vernal" is an example of the "Cheap seed" producers often buy when trying to save money on seeding costs. A newer proprietary high yielding variety, "PGI 424" represents the improved genetics available to producers with a higher yield potential.

Sample Calculations :

Seed Cost:

- Old Variety "Vernal" alfalfa \$1.50/lb x 20 lbs per acre = \$30 per acre

-New High yielding variety \$3.00/lb x 20 lbs = \$60 per acre

Average Yield of each variety (98 trial years):

- "Vernal" average 5.23 tons/acre/year

- New Variety "PGI 424" average 6.34 tons/acre/year = **1.11 tons/acre/ year yield advantage**

Estimated Increased Hay Revenue first year of production minus added seed cost:

Hay price

\$100/ton x 1.11 tons = \$111- \$60= \$51 per acre more profit using better genetics

\$150/ton x 1.11 tons = \$166-\$60= \$106 per acre more profit using better genetics

\$200/ton x 1.11 tons = \$222-\$60= \$162 per acre more profit using better genetics

Summary - First year yield advantage of new improved variety over old "Cheap Seed" variety, more than pays for increased seed cost. At today's hay prices, it generally only takes ½ a bale or less, yield increase in the first year of production to pay for any additional seed costs of an improved variety. The remaining years of increased yield production and stand life results in significant added revenue for the producer. **Cheap Seed is not always a good buy if it means lower yield potential and shorter stand life.** (SOURCE: *Don Miller, IN 2012 AFGC Proceedings and Abstracts, January 2012*)

UPCOMING EVENTS

APR 10-11 Kentucky Grazing School, U.K. Research & Education Center, Princeton

SEP 6 KFGC Field Day, Hart County

OCT 30 Kentucky Grazing Conference, U.K. Research & Education Center, Princeton

2013

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



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