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FORAGE NEWS

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

February 2012

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

ALFALFA CONFERENCE JUST DAYS AWAY

The 32nd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference will be held at the Cave City Convention Center February 23, 2012 with registration to begin at 8:00 Central Time. The program committee has put together a great program with speakers from University, Industry and producers. The exhibit hall will be full and we will have our largest silent auction ever. The keynote presentation of the event will be our Blue Ribbon Farmer Panel. Registration is \$15.00 (\$5.00 students) to be paid at the door and includes proceedings, breaks and lunch. Program for the day includes:

- 8:00 Registration, Visit Exhibits and Silent Auction
- 8:30 Welcome
- 8:45 Getting more from your Alfalfa - Garry Lacefield
- 9:00 How are Roundup Ready Varieties Performing? – Ray Smith
- 9:20 Marketing Quality Alfalfa Hay - Tom Keene
- 9:40 Kentucky Department of Agriculture Hay Testing Program - Kim Field
- 10:00 Break, Silent Auction, Visit Exhibits
- 10:30 Alfalfa Seed Coating: Status & New Developments – Bill Talley
- 10:45 National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance - Beth Nelson
- 11:00 The Role of Alfalfa in Horse Diets - Bob Coleman
- 11:30 Role and Importance of Alfalfa in Beef Diets – Jeff Lehmkuhler
- 12:00 Lunch and Awards
- 1:15 Silent Auction Results
- 1:30 Farmer Panel
 - Clayton Geraldts
 - Bill Payne
 - Charles Powell
- 3:00 Adjourn

For more information, see our website at www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage or call Christi 270-365-7541, Ext. 221.

KENTUCKY PRODUCER WINS NATIONAL FORAGE SPOKESMAN CONTEST

Congratulation to Brent White of Lyon County who won the 2012 American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC) Forage Spokesperson competition which was held in Louisville during the AFGC Conference. Brent owns and operates a 420 acre farm where he has 65 head of angus/cross cows. In recent years, Brent has implemented a rotational grazing system that included the development of water and fencing. By moving to a rotational grazing system, Brent has extended his grazing season while reducing his dependency on stored feeds/hay by 30%. Great job Officer White.

For more information on KFGC and forages visit the following websites: www.kfgc.org and www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage (Don Sorrell)

KFGC MEMBERS WIN AWARDS AT THE AFGC MEETING IN LOUISVILLE

Members of the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council continued the tradition of excellence at the recent American Forage and Grassland Council Annual meeting in Louisville, KY. Brent White placed first in the Forage Spokesperson contest, continuing the tradition of KFGC members winning this competition more than any other state. Kelly Vaughan and Taylor Reiter, students at the University of Kentucky, won the undergraduate student Forage Bowl competition. Christopher Gerald's won 1st Place in both the Education and the Harvested Forages categories of the competitive photo contest. Kenton Sena, a student at Asbury University and a UK intern the last two summers won the Wildlife and Conservation category.

Each year the AFGC holds an emerging scientist competition where students from across the U.S. present their research projects. Ben Goff, a PhD student with Dr. Glenn Aiken placed 3rd in this competition. If you are interested in entering any of these competitions we encourage you to go to the UK Forage Website (www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage) and click on the AFGC button. The hay contest will be held this year at the AFGC summer tour May 17-18. If you are a hay producer, please consider going to the web site and entering your best hay.

HEART OF AMERICA GRAZING CONFERENCE

The 11th Heart of America Grazing Conference was held January 25-26 at the Holiday Inn in Mt. Vernon, Illinois. Over 150 attended the conference with one guest all the way from Argentina. Speakers included University, USDA, Industry personnel, and producers. Congratulations to the Illinois Committee for all their hard work. The 12th HOAGC will be held in Springfield, Missouri on February 25-26, 2013.

KENTUCKY GRAZING SCHOOLS

The Kentucky Grazing School has been and continues to be a popular event for those interested in learning about practical grazing techniques and tools. The spring school will be at the University of Kentucky Research and Education Center in Princeton April 10-11, 2012. The fall school will be in Woodford County, September 11-12, 2012 at the Woodford County Extension Office and C.O. Little Research Center in Versailles. Information on the spring school is on our website at www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage.

GROWERS LIKE RR ALFALFA, SURVEY SHOWS

Of those who grew Roundup Ready alfalfa, 91% said they were satisfied, very pleased or felt the technology "far exceeded expectations," according to a University of California survey on the subject.

Survey results were reported at the Western Alfalfa & Forage Conference, held Dec. 11-13 in Las Vegas, NV.

A total of 381 growers took the voluntary survey, conducted via the Internet this fall, said Steve Orloff, the Siskiyou County, CA, farm advisor who authored it with Extension forage specialist Dan Putnam. Of those, 113 respondents indicated that they had grown the transgenic legume and were then directed to questions on what they liked and didn't like about it. For those results, see "[Survey Tells What Roundup Ready Alfalfa Growers Like Best](#)."

The survey's results covered 27 pages; 14 pages were filled with comments from organic, conventional and Roundup Ready alfalfa growers.

Orloff said it likely overrepresented organic, export and Western growers and underrepresented growers in areas including the Northeast and parts of the Midwest.

Nearly 70% of the survey takers reported that they had not grown Roundup Ready alfalfa, representing about 50% of the alfalfa acreage grown by respondents. About 61% of that group said they didn't wish to grow the transgenic crop in the future, 21% said they would and 19% indicated "maybe." A total of 62% of this group, which included organic and conventional growers, felt that other growers should be allowed to grow the crop, either with or without restrictions; 38% felt that others should not be allowed to grow it.

Asked why they didn't elect to grow Roundup Ready alfalfa, 48% answered that they already had an effective weed-control program; 38%, that they were philosophically opposed to genetically engineered crops; 32%, that they grow organic alfalfa; 24%, that they were concerned about the crop's marketability, and 21%, that it was expensive. (SOURCE: *Fae Holin, Editor, Hay & Forage Grower, e-Hay Weekly, December 20, 2011*)

INPUT CALCULATOR AVAILABLE FOR ALFALFA GROWERS

Wisconsin farmers can expect input costs for growing alfalfa and other crops to rise by about 15% in 2012, says University of Wisconsin Extension educator Ken Barnett. He looks for fertilizer and seed prices to be up and pesticide prices to be relatively stable.

To help maximize investment in inputs, Barnett advises producers to check out the [2012 Crop Budget Cost of Production Calculator for Wisconsin](#). It allows producers to construct enterprise budgets for corn after corn, corn after soybeans, corn silage after alfalfa, corn silage after corn, soybeans, winter wheat, seeding alfalfa and established alfalfa for hay and haylage.

For more about the calculator, contact Barnett at 715-355-4561 or ken.barnett@ces.uwex.edu. (SOURCE: *e-Hay Weekly, December 20, 2011*)

KENTUCKY BEEF CATTLE MARKET UPDATE

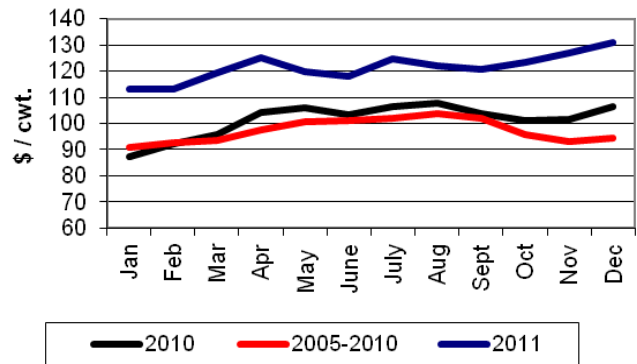
Kentucky feeder cattle markets improved for the 3rd straight month in December. Both charts that follow show a counter seasonal upward movement since September. Some of the price improvement in calves during the 4th quarter came from improved grazing conditions in the plains, but a great deal can also be attributed to improving fundamentals. Spring feeder cattle futures have continued to rise, increasing the breakeven bid price for calves placed into backgrounding programs.

The increasing price of calves has impacted the buy sell margins for winter backgrounding. At times in the fall, gross margins between current calf prices and futures based feeder cattle price forecasts were around \$400. More recently, the margin has seemed to be in the \$300 to \$350 range. Still, depending on feed cost and availability, this is likely to look attractive to some. Plus, many may be placing calves now, with the intent to move them to pasture in the spring.

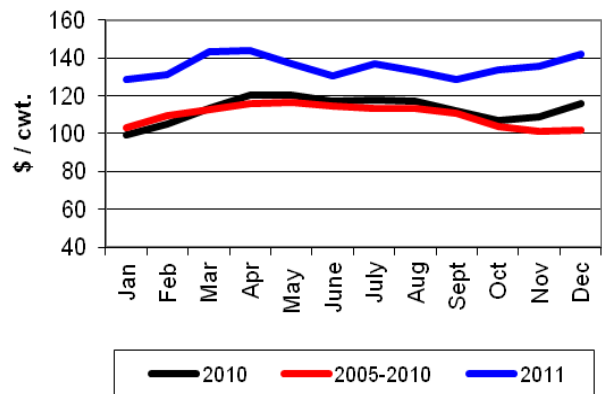
January is also a crucial month in the cattle markets as it brings the annual cattle inventory report. This year will be especially important as we will have a better picture of how the massive drought of 2011 impacted cattle numbers. The question is not if cow numbers will be down, it's how much. According to NASS estimates, databased by the Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC), cow slaughter was up by about 4.5% through November. However, heifer slaughter is actually down by 2.4%. I would expect that beef cow numbers have decreased by at least 2% during 2011. If the actual number does come in above 2%, this would suggest a very small calf crop for 2012 and further fuel calf markets.

(SOURCE: *Kenny Burdine, Livestock Marketing Specialist, University of Kentucky*)

**Medium / Large Frame #1 Steers
700 to 800 lbs**



**Medium / Large Frame #1 Steers
500 to 600 lbs**



UPCOMING EVENTS

- FEB 23 32nd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center, Cave City
- APR 10-11 Kentucky Grazing School, U.K. Research & Education Center, Princeton

Garry D. Laceyfield

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Extension Forage Specialist
February 2012