

KFGC
Forage
Spokesman
Contest

Todd A. Clark Farms, Inc.

617 Tally Road
Lexington, KY 40502

Todd Clark is a tobacco, beef and forage producer in Fayette County. His primary operation is based on his 72 acre farm on Georgetown Road. At his personal farm, Todd has incorporated intensive grazing into his management technique in order to optimize space and profits. Along with two other farms that he leases, Todd backgrounds 285 feeder calves per year on 150 acres. The animals come onto the farm weighing 450 lbs. and will leave at 850 lbs. Todd utilizes an alfalfa/orchardgrass mix along with endophyte-free fescue and red clover among other forage types. In addition to the rotational grazing, Todd feeds the calves approximately 200 round bales of alfalfa/grass haylage. Todd also markets 15,000 small square bales of alfalfa/orchardgrass, 5,000 small square bales of alfalfa/timothy, and 10,000 bales of mixed grass hay in small square bales to small horse farms in the area. Todd also custom bales approximately 15,000 small square bales that are used for bedding at local thoroughbred farms. In total, Todd manages approximately 700 acres of forage in Fayette and neighboring counties.

Robey Farms

2160 Schochoh Road
Adairville, KY 42202

Robey Farms is a sixth generation family farm started in 1899 in the farming community of Schochoh in Logan County. The farm is currently operated by the third (D.L. and Jane), fourth (Lee and Denise), and fifth (Chris, Adam, and Eli) generations. The farm consists of 4,200 acres of corn, 3,000 acres of small grains, double-cropped with soybeans, 600 acres of alfalfa, 220 acres of tobacco, and 1,000 acres of grassland. The dairy operation consists of 1,200 milking and dry cows, 1,000 head of heifers, 200 registered Holstein bulls and 350 Holstein feeder steers.

The new dairy facility was completed in 2003, with advances in cow comfort, the rolling herd average is 28,028 pounds milk, 1,026 pounds fat, and 832 pounds of protein. Emphasis of maintaining and increasing profitability are placed on forage quality, genetics, and production practices. The dairy diet consists of corn silage, alfalfa haylage, whole cottonseed, and a grain mix which contains corn, soybean meal, soyhulls, and a purchased concentrate.

Forage production provides the dairy with its greatest advantage. Dairy cows produce, reproduce, and maintain their health best on a high forage diet, but to maintain high production the forages must be of the highest quality. The forages must be harvested at the right stage of maturity, moisture, length of chop, and stored properly. We start corn silage harvest when dry matter reaches 30% and try to finish before it reaches 37%. The last two years we have produced about 25% of our corn silage from Brown Mid Rib varieties with very positive response in the cows. We select varieties based on plant digestibility, grain yield, and overall yield. Yields range from 15 tons to 25 tons per acre.

Alfalfa is a great source of protein and fiber but more importantly is an energy source not derived from starch. Corn is more efficient to grow but the starch level of the overall diet must be limited. A 60% corn silage, 40% haylage diet for the forage portion seems to work well. Alfalfa is cut on three to four week intervals beginning in late April through September. Often a late season cutting is possible in late October. Overall yield is around 7 dry matter tons per acre at 23% protein, 40% NDF, .64 NE/Lact.

Other forages that are grown are small grains silage, pearl millet, tropical corn silage, and grass hay. Young stock are grazed from four months of age until entering the dry cow system sixty days before calving. Males are grazed from four months to eight months then are placed on refusal feed from the dairy rations. Bulls are marketed to other dairy farms at service age and steers are sold in load lots at about 850 pounds. Between the lactating and dry cows, young heifers, springer heifers, bulls, and steers all classes and qualities of forages can be utilized.