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Forage News

Plant and Soil Sciences

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2-1-2010

## Forage News [2010-02]

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky

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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>

## February 2010

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

### ROUNDUP READY ALFALFA: COMMENT PERIOD DEADLINE

**FEBRUARY 16, 2010**

 Please voice your opinion on Roundup Ready Alfalfa before the deadline of **February 16, 2010**. You can comment by way of letter addressed to:

 Docket No. APHIS-2007-0044  
Regulatory Analysis and Development  
PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8  
4700 River Road, Unit 118  
Riverdale, MD 20737-1238

or on-line at:

<http://www.regulations.gov/search/Regs/home.html#submitComment?R=0900006480a6b7a1>

### 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY KENTUCKY ALFALFA CONFERENCE

WOW!!! It's hard to believe our 30<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference is just days away. I am very excited about the program we have assembled for this special, historic conference. Dr. Joe Bouton, Dr. Don Ball, Dr. Gary Bates, Mr. Ken Johnson, Dr. Bob Coleman, Dr. Ray Smith, and Mr. Bill Talley are all leaders in "Alfalfa" covering all aspects of the crop from variety development to harvesting and marketing. I am so pleased to have one of our very best Kentucky Alfalfa producers, Mr. Clayton Geralds, on the program again this year. Clayton is a former Kentucky Forage Spokesman and AFGC National Forage Spokesman runner-up. Our day will conclude with a "Blue Ribbon Panel" featuring all speakers.

 8:00 a.m. **Central Standard Time** Registration, Visit Exhibit, Silent Auction

 8:45 Welcome – Dr. Jimmy Henning  
Mr. Don Sorrell

 9:00 Reflections after 30 Years – Dr. Garry Lacefield  
9:15 Advances in Alfalfa Seed Coating – Mr. Bill Talley  
9:30 Alfalfa: Value in Crop Rotations – Dr. Ray Smith  
9:45 Alfalfa Hay for Horses – Dr. Bob Coleman

10:00 Break, Visit Exhibits, Silent Auction

10:30 Alfalfa Baleage – Dr. Gary Bates

11:00 Alfalfa for Grazing – Mr. Ken Johnson

11:30 Alfalfa Varieties for the Future – Dr. Joe Bouton

12:00 Lunch, Visit Exhibits, Silent Auction

1:00 Awards

1:20 Silent Auction Results

1:30 Alfalfa for Wildlife – Dr. Don Ball

2:00 How we Produce &amp; Market Alfalfa Hay – Mr. Clayton Geralds

2:30 Blue Ribbon Panel featuring All Speakers

3:00 Adjourn

We will have a full house of exhibitors, along with our largest Silent Auction.

Registration is \$15.00 (\$5.00 students) and includes proceedings and other educational materials, refreshments, and meal. CCA Credit will be available. There is no need to pre-register.

Look forward to seeing you there!

### PLAN NOW TO ATTEND AGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE,

**FEB. 4-7, LEXINGTON**

The American Grassfed Association's Seventh Annual Grazing America Conference will be held Feb. 4-7, 2010 in Lexington, Ky. The conference, under the title of Growing Your Grassfed Business: Smart

Risk Management and High Quality Marketing will feature a full day of sessions on risk management, quality marketing, forages, breeds, and other controls to make the grassfed business thrive.

National authors Gary Nabhan and Betty Fussell are scheduled to speak, as well as Local author, John van Willigen.

The conference also will feature "From Farm Gate to Customer's Plate," a full day of classes on butchery and cooking grassfed and pastured products. Presenters include two of America's finest chefs, Michael Leviton, Lumiere Restaurant, Newton, Mass., and Jay Dunham, one of Kentucky's finest. Hosted by Chef Bob Perry of the University of Kentucky, participants will learn to teach their own customers how to make a magnificent meal with grassfed and pastured products. Also featured on this day will be butchery sessions taught by Dr. Gregg Rentfrow.

"This year's conference is shaping up to be fun, exciting and educational," said AGA Executive Director Carrie Balkcom.

"Participants will learn the latest in animal husbandry, production recommendations, and marketing tips."

Balkcom adds that another great aspect of Grazing America is the chance producers have to network and learn from each other, "Often the relationships made at the conference have long-term impact on the producer's operation, whether through mentoring or marketing connections or a myriad of opportunities to learn."

The conference will also provide producers with information and applications for AGA's recently launched grassfed certification program. The program is the only third party audited program in the U.S. and that the product they buy is grassfed.

"A large segment of today's public is looking to buy healthy, locally-raised meat products," said AGA President Patricia Whisnant, DVM, Doniphan, Mo. "The AGA's certification program ensures these consumers they are getting what they want."

Conference co-sponsors are the University of Kentucky's College of Agriculture, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Kentucky Grasslands Council and Berea College. The conference is open to members and non-members alike.

 To reserve lodging call the Lexington Hyatt Hotel at 859-253-1234, and mention the AGA for discounted room rates. For more information on the conference and to register, visit [www.americangrassfed.org](http://www.americangrassfed.org).

### DOES AMOUNT OF "HARD" ALFALFA SEED REALLY MATTER?

In each bag of alfalfa seed there is generally a proportion of "live" seed that does not germinate soon after planting. This is known as "hard" seed and may not germinate for several months. A study was established at three locations to determine the effect of the amount of hard seed on seed emergence and yield. In each of two years seed with either low, medium, or high amounts of hard seed from four alfalfa varieties were planted in the spring. Alfalfa emergence was monitored during the following months for a year. Seventy percent of the seeds emerged within 2 weeks, 6% in 2 to 4 weeks, and 3% within 4 to 8 weeks after planting, and none after that.

No seedlings emerged the spring after sowing. Amount of hard seed decreased slightly the number of seedlings that emerged within 2 weeks but did not affect overall establishment or yield. Amount of hard seed has no practical effect on alfalfa seedlings. (SOURCE: PFGC News, Vol. 20, #1)

## WHAT'S EATING YOUR ORCHARDGRASS?

Reports out of Maryland and Virginia last year indicate that Billbugs may be damaging orchardgrass stands. Billbugs, in the weevil family, are noted for their beak-like snouts as adults, legless larvae, and their boring-type damage.

Adults are gray, black or brown usually ¼-½ inch long. Billbugs have a unique snout in that their antennae are attached at the base of the snout nearest the eyes. The other major grass feeding weevils have the antennae attached near the tip of the snout.

In Pennsylvania, the adult overwinters and feeds for a short period in the spring before dispersing and laying eggs in May and early June. The adult rarely flies and usually walks. The adult female chews a small hole in the grass stem or leaf sheath and deposits an egg. After hatching, the larva feeds inside and hollows the stem before eating out of the stem and feeding on the roots. Larva feeding on roots are often intermixed and consequently confused with white grub larvae in the soil. Billbug damage occurs in late June into mid-July. At this time the larva is hollowing out the stem and crown causing stems to turn brown and die.

The degree-day models help predict developmental activity and thus can better estimate these peak activity periods during the years with abnormal growing seasons. Using a threshold temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit adult activity is first noticed at 280-352 degree-days and egg-laying beginning after 560-624 degree-days. (SOURCE: PFGC News, Vol. 20, #1)

## FORAGES AT KCA

My thanks to the more than 150 who attended the "Clover Symposium" at KCA in Lexington. I am most appreciative to our speakers Dr. Don Ball, Dr. Ray Smith and Don Sorrell for their excellent presentations. This was our 15<sup>th</sup> year to have a "special emphasis" on Forages at KCA and as always, I asked for your thoughts on topics for next year as I closed. THANKS to all of you who have given me your ideas and requests for next year. My work is cut out for me to put together a program to accommodate your requests to equal or exceed this year – I'll do my best!

My thanks to Dave Maples, Carey Brown and all the fine staff at KCA for all they continue to do to make putting this program together so easy, enjoyable and rewarding.

## HEART OF AMERICA GRAZING CONFERENCE

Over 150 people from several states attended the 9<sup>th</sup> Heart of America Grazing Conference held in Wilmington, Ohio January 20-21. The conference is a regional five-state event hosted annually by Illinois, Missouri, Indiana, Ohio or Kentucky. The 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary HOAGC will be at the Holiday Inn-Hurstborne Lane, Louisville, Kentucky January 25-26, 2011. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

## HAY AND HORSES

Horses fed a diet of only forage have greater bacterial stability and fewer "bad" fecal bacteria, such as *Streptococcus* spp. than horses that are also fed concentrates. This finding, reported by a group of Swedish researchers, provides opportunities for the industry to develop more targeted feeding strategies to support equine health and welfare.

"Diets rich in readily fermentable carbohydrates, fed traditionally to meet the increased energy requirements of the performance horse, are associated with a number of gastrointestinal disorders that involve disturbances in the intestinal microbiota," wrote the research team, led by Professor Jan Erik Lindberg from the Department of Animal Science at the Swedish University of Agricultural Science.

In this preliminary study, researchers examined the impact of feeding a high-energy forage-only diet or a more traditional forage-concentrate diet on fecal microorganisms.

Lindberg and colleagues fed six mature Standardbred geldings in training either the forage-only or the forage-concentrate diets for 29 days. They extracted and analyzed bacterial DNA four times during the study period, measuring fecal pH and culturing bacteria on the last day.

According to the researchers, a forage-only diet "resulted in a microbial composition that was more stable and had lower counts of cultivable (lactic acid bacteria)." In addition, all study horses fed the forage-concentrate diet had motile and swarming *Lactobacillus ruminis* and significantly more *Clostridiaceae* cluster III in their feces than horses fed the forage-only diet.

The impact of these findings is unknown, relayed the authors.

This study is the first to describe changes in the uncultured bacterial populations of horses. Ultimately, the Swedish researchers hope to improve the intestinal health of horses and increase the body of knowledge regarding the relationship between diet and microbiota. Research concerning bacteria that appear and disappear with changes in diet is ongoing. (SOURCE: *Hay There!*, National Hay Association, December 2009)

## GRAZING 101: ENROLL IN 2010 KENTUCKY GRAZING SCHOOLS

Two Kentucky Grazing Schools will be held in 2010 covering almost all aspects of grazing systems. The first Grazing School will be held on April 14-15 at the UK Research and Education Center in Princeton; the other will be held August 9-10 at the Woodford County Extension Office and UK Animal Research Center in Versailles. Participants will work together in designing and building temporary pastures and watering systems, calculating pasture production, and determining stocking rates. Participants will also learn how to design a rotational grazing system for their farm, and receive classroom instruction on all aspects of forage and livestock production related to grazing systems. Go to our UK Forage Website for more information and a registration form ([www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage)), or contact Adam Probst if you have any questions [adam.probst@uky.edu](mailto:adam.probst@uky.edu) or 859-257-0597. (Adam Probst, UK Master Grazer Program)

## CLOVERS IN KENTUCKY

During the forage program at the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association Annual Convention, I had the opportunity to talk about the "role of clover down on the farm." To address this subject I surveyed KY's agriculture agents. The following is a summary of the results of that survey.

- \* 34% of KY's farmers seed clover as a hay crop and 42% seed clover in their pasture fields.

- \* Frost seeding at 46% is the most popular way clover is seeded, followed by no-till (32%) and conventional (22%).

- \* The benefits of seeding clover include: improve forage quality, reduces the need for nitrogen fertilization, reduces the effect of endophyte fescue and improved yield and animal performance.

- \* The reasons why farmers are not seeding clover include: costs, requires more management, increased fertility/lime, stand persistence and weather

It will cost you approximately \$25 per acre (seed and application costs) to seed clover into a hay or pasture field plus any additional fertilizer that may be needed. If you put some economic numbers (\$\$) to the benefits of clover this is what you could get in return:

- 2 to 3 tons additional yield (hay) per acre – \$70 to \$175
- 25 to 50 pounds increased weaning weight per calf - \$25 to \$50
- 10 to 20% improved conception rate (more calves) - \$500 or more per calf

Reduced nitrogen fertilization—\$25 to \$75 per acre

With these potential numbers, why aren't we seeding more clover?

For information on forages and upcoming forage programs go to [www.kfgc.org](http://www.kfgc.org) or UK's forage website at [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage). (Don Sorrell, KFGC, President)

## COMMERCIAL HAY DRYER MADE IN KENTUCKY

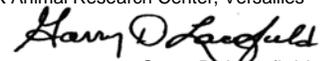
The Clim.Air.50 Hay Dryer used to be imported from Italy. Now it's being built by a sheet metal fabricator in Nicholasville, KY. Although this unit is expensive, it can dry 36 mid-sized square bales from 35% moisture to 15% moisture in 6 hours with an average \$7 to \$10/ton fuel cost (when using natural gas). Double D Supply Company in Missouri has the exclusive U.S. rights and more information can be found at [www.alfalfahaydryer.com](http://www.alfalfahaydryer.com).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

FEB 4-6 American Grassfed Association Annual Conference, Lexington  
FEB 25 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center

APR 14-15 Kentucky Grazing School, UK Research & Education Center, Princeton

AUG 9-10 Kentucky Grazing School, UK Animal Research Center, Versailles



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Extension Forage Specialist  
February 2010