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## Forage News [2010-01]

University of Kentucky Department of Plant and Soil Sciences

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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>

## January 2010

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

### FORAGES AT KCA

Clovers have always been a vital part of Kentucky's forage base. They have played an important role in the past and are playing a major role at present; however, I believe their most important role is in our future. Although we have always placed emphasis on clovers, we are going to place "special" emphasis during our Forages at KCA meeting in Lexington January 15. Our program keynote speaker is Dr. Don Ball, Extension Forage Specialist from Auburn University. Dr. Ball is a native of Kentucky and graduated from Western Kentucky University before going to Auburn for his Ph.D. He is senior author of the book "Southern Forages", and has over thirty years experience working with clovers. In addition, we will also feature our own forage extension specialists along with KFGC President Mr. Don Sorrell who will talk about Role of Clovers "Down on the Farm". Don't forget to bring your Southern Forages book if you would like Dr. Ball to autograph it. KFGC will also have books for sale that day. A complete proceedings, along with other clover-related materials, will also be available. Below is the schedule for the program:

- 1:45 Welcome – Dr. Garry Lacefield & Mr. Don Sorrell
- 2:00 Why Grow Clovers? – Dr. Don Ball
- 3:00 Estimating Clovers in Pastures – Dr. Ray Smith
- 3:25 Establishing Clovers in Pastures & Hay Fields – Dr. Garry Lacefield
- 3:50 Role of Clovers "Down on the Farm" – Mr. Don Sorrell
- 4:15 Discussion
- 4:30 Adjourn

### HEART OF AMERICA GRAZING CONFERENCE

The 9<sup>th</sup> HOAGC will be held at the Roberts Conference Centre in Wilmington, Ohio on January 20-21, 2010. Program and other information is available on our website at [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage). Kentucky will host the 10<sup>th</sup> Heart of America Grazing Conference in January 2011.

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

Mark your calendars and plan to be at the Cave City Convention Center February 25, 2010 for the 30<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference. The conference program committee has done a superb job in getting the "Who's Who" in the Alfalfa Industry as speakers for this historic conference. Dr. Jimmy Henning and Mr. Don Sorrell will welcome the group at 8:45 followed by our opening presentation "Kentucky Alfalfa Conference – Reflections After 30 Years". Mr. Bill Talley will discuss "Advances in Alfalfa Seed Coating"; Dr. Ray Smith will discuss "Alfalfa: Value in Crop Rotation" followed by Dr. Bob Coleman with "Alfalfa Hay for Horses", all of this before our morning break. During the break participants can visit with over twenty-five exhibitors and bid on over twenty-five Silent Auction items. Following break, Dr. Gary Bates from the University of Tennessee will discuss "Alfalfa Baleage" followed by Mr. Ken Johnson, Executive Director of the Society for Range Management talking about "Alfalfa as a Grazing Crop". Ken will be followed by Alfalfa legend Dr. Joe Bouton who will discuss "Alfalfa Varieties for the Future". During lunch we will present our annual Alfalfa Awards. The afternoon program will feature alfalfa producer and past National Hay Association President, Mr. Ron Tombaugh who will discuss "Producing and Marketing Hay". Dr. Don Ball, a native Kentuckian will follow discussing "Alfalfa for Wildlife". The program will conclude with a Blue Ribbon panel featuring all the speakers. Registration is \$15.00 (\$5.00 students) and includes breaks, meal,

proceedings and other educational materials. It is not necessary to pre-register. If you have questions call Garry Lacefield (270-365-7541, Ext. 202) or Christi Forsythe (270-365-7541, Ext. 221).



### TALL FESCUE FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

The story of tall fescue is not just a story for grass scientists, but for scientists. Beginning with the discovery of a green Kentucky pasture, and the spiral of poor animal performance that followed, the study of tall fescue is an ongoing puzzle, with an intricate series of biochemical and physiological processes and interactions among animals, plants, fungi, and the environment. It's a story that reveals how science develops and moves through disciplines, challenges, and new advances in research and technology.

Topics covered include the history and classification of tall fescue; its ecological suitability and adaptation; establishment and management; pests and control methods; its utilization, quality, and anti-quality factors; genetic improvement; seed production and marketing; and turf and conservation uses.

"The past half century has been a most astounding time for those of us fortunate enough to have been involved in research and teaching about tall fescue....The whole 35-year process has seemed akin to a complicated detective novel, completed with some distracting issues and alleged but innocent perpetrators."

This 540 page hardcover Agronomy Monograph 53 (ISBN: 978-0-89118-172-9) has been released by the ASA-CSSA-SSSA. It may be ordered online at [www.societystore.org](http://www.societystore.org) as item #B40725 for a cost of \$150.00 (Member price: \$120.00). (SOURCE: H.A. Fribourg, D.B. Hannaway and C.P. West, Editors)

### GRAZING CONFERENCE PHOTOS

Photo highlights of the 10<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference are now posted on our website at <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/>. My thanks to Adam Probst for taking the pictures and Christi Forsythe for organizing and posting to the web.

### HAY TESTING

Why should I test my forages? Tested forages can mean greater profitability, forage testing provides valuable nutritional information, helps determine fair market value, and helps you compare forage quality from year-to-year in your program. To get your forage tested by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture Forage Testing Program call 1-800-248-4628. Trained staff will visit your farm and collect samples. A fee of \$10.00 per lot is payable at collection. Results will be mailed to you as soon as analysis is complete.

### GROWING ALFALFA IN THE SOUTH

A new publication on Growing Alfalfa in the South has been placed on our website at <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/ForagePublications.htm>

## NEW FORAGE VARIETY TEST REPORTS

All 14 of the 2009 Forage Variety Test reports are now available on the UK Forage Website [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage) under the "Forage Variety Trials" section. Your local county agent will also have copies of these reports or he/she can easily print them off for you. We are continuing to publish our summary report which includes the average performance of all the named varieties that UK has tested over the last 10 years. The summary report is the best way to compare variety performance over years and to narrow down the varieties that will work best on your farm. Our individual reports contain the detailed yield, maturity, and persistence data from all the entries in our current trials.

Here are a few highlights from several of the individual reports for 2009. The Summer Annual Reports contain most of the new teff varieties along with many of the new sudangrass and sorghum – sudangrass varieties. Our Ryegrass report provides important information on winter survival of annual and perennial ryegrass varieties. There are several perennial ryegrass varieties that have shown good survival for 3 years at our Lexington location. We have recently added bromegrass varieties to our comprehensive tall fescue trial report.

We are often asked where you can buy seed from specific varieties that have performed well in our UK Forage Trials. Unfortunately, companies from across the U.S. enter varieties in our trials; therefore some varieties are not commercially available in KY. The best recommendation is to first find out what varieties are sold by your local dealers, then refer to the appropriate variety report to determine which of these varieties produce the highest yield and show the best survival in KY.

## AMERICAN GRASSFED ASSOCIATION COMING BACK TO LEXINGTON

The American Grassfed Association is coming back to Lexington February 4-6 for their 2010 Annual Conference after their successful meeting here last year. Go to their website for complete information and to register for the conference ([www.americangrassfed.org](http://www.americangrassfed.org)).

This conference is primarily producers and extension personnel that want applied information on raising livestock to slaughter completely on grass (i.e. – grasses and legumes). Sessions at the conference will include: Forages for grass finished beef, Economic analysis of grass-fed operations, Growing your grass-fed business, Hands-on butchery and cooking sessions, How to go from farm-gate to customer plate, and many more.

If you are currently raising grass finished beef (or goats or lamb) or are just interested in the potential of this market for your operation this is the conference for you.

## CONSIDER JOINING KFGC IN 2010

Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council (KFGC) is your state-wide forage organization which has as its mission to promote the use of forages as a profitable, economical and environmentally sound agriculture enterprise on KY's farms. One of the primary goals of KFGC is to increase the productivity and profitability of KY's forage producers. Some of the ways this can be done is by increasing forage yield and quality and by improving forage utilization and marketing. To address these and other forage related issues, KFGC sponsors educational programs such as the KY Grazing Conference, Alfalfa Conference, Master Grazer Programs, Master Grazer School, forage field days and tours.

If you have not already done so, please consider becoming a member of KFGC in 2010. Annual membership dues are \$20 for individual members. KFGC members receive the following forage publications: Forage News, The Forage Leader and Hay and Forage Grower. These publications will help keep you informed about the latest forage research and upcoming forage educational programs. Membership forms can be printed off of the KFGC website listed below. If you don't have access to the KFGC website you can send your name and address with your dues. Please send all dues to Tom Keene at N222-B Ag. Science North, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546.

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, President, KFGC)

## COMMENT PERIOD ON RR ALFALFA

DECEMBER 18, 2009 – FEBRUARY 16, 2010

Time to make your voice heard! Here is an issue of critical importance to all alfalfa and forage growers and industry members.

To SUBMIT COMMENTS TO USDA-APHIS, SEE <http://www.regulations.gov/search/Regs/home.html#submitComment?R=0900006480a6b7a1> A link to the APHIS EIS document is there.

The long-awaited decision on the de-regulation of glyphosate-tolerant (GT) alfalfa (Roundup Ready or RR Alfalfa) has been made.

USDA-APHIS, which regulates biotechnology traits, has completed a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and posted this on its website. This was required by a legal decision in March of 2007 due to a lawsuit brought by Center for Food Safety.

Their decision:

"APHIS has made a preliminary determination that action should be taken, and that action will be to grant nonregulated status to GT alfalfa lines J101 and J163, in whole. The introduction of these GT alfalfa lines has no significant impact on the environment. These GT alfalfa plants, lines J101 and J163, are not plant pests and are unlikely to pose plant pest risks."

It is time for you to weigh in, and provide comments to APHIS on their preliminary decision – should they be supported in this decision to allow commercialization of this trait (non-regulation) or should it continue to be regulated (not allow commercialization)? Have they addressed the important issues associated with this technology?

There are a range of issues associated with this, but primarily it comes down to:

- The claim that this trait cause excessive gene-flow to organic or conventional alfalfa fields which will prevent organic or conventional growers from farming as they wish, and lead to eventual contamination of all alfalfa fields.
- The claim that the introduction of this trait cause much larger development of roundup-resistant weeds which will have an impact on the environment.

These were the two most critical issues in the lawsuit, and the important issues that APHIS needed to address, along with market impacts.

Those who disagree with these claims argue that

- Gene flow is primarily an issue with seed production (<1% of the acreage), and can be (and is) managed with isolation requirements in seed production. In hay crops, gene flow is largely prevented, since hay is mostly harvested before significant bloom. Techniques such as managing feral alfalfa and testing products using a simple test strip can assure customers of the non-GE status of hay or seed.
- Weed resistance to herbicides is an old problem with agriculture, and not unique to RR alfalfa and can be managed through diverse weed management strategies that have been developed over many years by weed scientists. If it occurs it will primarily have an impact on the effectiveness of Roundup, not the environment.

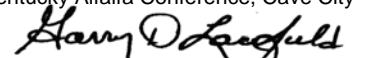
UC and other universities have detailed publications on both of these issues, on gene flow and on weed resistance, see below link.

APHIS has extensive documentation of their study of these issues, plus related market issues in the EIS statement. Please see their website below. The EIS alone is 1476 pages long, with documentation, but the critical issues can be easily found.

We should keep in mind that this decision will impact the use of all genetically-engineered crops in general for alfalfa in the future (not just RR alfalfa), and perhaps for other crops as well. (SOURCE: Dr. Dan Putnam, Extension Forage Specialist, University of California-Davis)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- |           |   |
|-----------|---|
| JAN 12    | 2010 Kentucky Small Ruminant Grazing Conference, Fayette County Extension Office, Lexington |
| JAN 15    | Forages at KCA, Lexington   |
| JAN 20-21 | Heart of America Grazing Conference, Wilmington, OH   |
| FEB 4-6   | American Grassfed Association Annual Conference, Lexington                                  |
| FEB 25    | 30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center      |

  
Garry D. Lacefield  
Extension Forage Specialist  
January 2010