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## Forage News [2009-09]

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky

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# FORAGE NEWS

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

## September 2009

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

### ANDERSON COUNTY TO HOST SEPT. 3 FORAGE DAY

The Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council Field Day will be held September 3 on the James R. Smith Farm in Lawrenceburg. County Agent Tommy Yankey and all the group have done an outstanding job planning and preparing for this event. It will start at 4:00 p.m. with registration. Tours start at 5:15. Tour stops and speakers include:

- 1 11 Acres of Eastern Gamagrass Interseeded with Red Clover and Pasja Forage Turnips for Summer Grazing –  
Dr. Glen Aiken, USDA Ag. Research Service, Animal Scientist
- 2 Alfalfa/Orchardgrass Hay Production and Management –  
Dr. Garry Lacefield, Extension Forage Specialist
- 3 Field Corn Planted for Grazing in Fall/Winter –  
Tommy Yankey, Anderson Co. Extension Agent for Agriculture
- 4 Renovating Fescue Pastures –  
Dr. Ray Smith, Extension Forage Specialist
- 5 Watering Systems for Rotational Grazing –  
Ralph Quillin, Kentucky Graziers Supply
- 6 Balancing Nutritional Requirements when Grazing Field Corn –  
Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler, Extension Beef Specialist

Supper will be prepared and served by the Anderson County Cattlemen's Association. For more information about the program and directions to the farm, see our website <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage>

### ENROLL IN 2009 KENTUCKY GRAZING SCHOOL

The 2009 Kentucky Grazing School will be held October 8 and 9 in Woodford County. We are returning to the roots of this program and have designed a very hands-on applied program. Participants will not only learn how to design a rotational grazing system on their farm, they will set up temporary electric fence and build a pasture water system from the ground up. Groups will work to calculate pasture production at the Woodford County UK Research Station and will determine the paddock size needed for 4 stockers to graze for 24 hours. The 2-day grazing school will also provide 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 Ray Smith if you have questions ([raysmith1@uky.edu](mailto:raysmith1@uky.edu) or 859-257-3358)

### 10<sup>TH</sup> KENTUCKY GRAZING CONFERENCE

The 10<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference will be held at the UK Research & Education Center in Princeton on October 29. The program will feature Grazing Programs, Species & Varieties for Grazing, Eastern Gamagrass, Weed Control, Stored feed: quantity and quality, Extending Grazing Season and Animal Welfare/Animal Rights. Mr. Ed Ballard, Animal Systems Educator, University of Illinois will be the keynote speaker. KFGC will present their Annual Awards during lunch. The afternoon program will be highlighted with our Forage Spokesman Contest. Exhibits and educational displays, along with a Silent Auction will be available during the day. For a copy of the program and additional information visit our website at [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage) or contact your County Extension Agent or Christi Forsythe by phone at 270-365-7541, Ext. 221 or e-mail [cforsyth@uky.edu](mailto:cforsyth@uky.edu).

### KFGC Update

If you are interested in improving your pasture and hay fields, you don't want to miss the **September 3, KY Forage and Grassland Council Field Day at the James Smith Farm in Anderson County** (1984 Graefenburg Rd., Lawrenceburg). The Smith Farm is a beef/forage farm that is on the cutting edge of maximizing forages as a part of their grazing and winter feeding program. The farm grows traditional forages such as fescue, clover and alfalfa and non-traditional forages such as eastern gamagrass, turnips, and field corn for grazing. Tours start at 5:15 p.m. with the evening meal served at 7:30 p.m.

The KFGC Board of Directors met on August 6, at the Hardin County Extension office. The Nominating Committee brought forth a list of individuals who will form a ballot for the election of new 2010 KFGC Board of Directors. You should receive this ballot in the mail in the next couple of weeks. The Forage Spokesperson Committee presented a list of producers who were interested in sharing their on-farm forage experiences during the KY Grazing Conference on October 29. Ralph Quillin gave an update on the possibilities of introducing a coupon book for 2010 KFGC members. For information on upcoming forage programs and activities 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).

### PRODUCERS CAN RECEIVE UP TO \$45.00/TON

#### MATCHING FUNDS FOR GROWING BIOMASS

The federal Biomass Crop Assistance Program (BCAP) has been discussed for over 2 years, but the funding and guidelines for this program are now available. The initial part of this program will match what producers are paid for biomass up to \$45.00 per ton. Biomass, such as switchgrass, must be delivered to an approved company (e.g. – power company, pelleting plant, etc.). After the company writes a check, producers will complete a form at their local FSA office to receive their matching funds. This program will also provide matching funds.

### FORAGE SPOKESMAN NOMINATIONS -

#### DEADLINE SEPT. 15

Nominations are being received for the 2009 KFGC Awards and Forage Spokesman. Awards will be given to deserving individuals representing producers, industry, public (State & County). We also need nominations for our Forage Spokesman Contest to be held in conjunction with the 10<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference in Princeton on October 29. To nominate a producer, send a one-page nomination to Dr. Ray Smith, [raysmith1@uky.edu](mailto:raysmith1@uky.edu) or mail to Plant and Soil Science Dept., 105 Plant Science Bldg., 1405 Veterans Road, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546-0312.

### ALFALFA INTENSIVE TRAINING SET FOR INDIANAPOLIS

The National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance has scheduled their next Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar for November 17-19, 2009 in Indianapolis, IN. Taught by a team of four nationally recognized alfalfa experts, this year's Alfalfa Intensive Training promises to provide top-notch training for seed dealers, sales staff, consultants, large producers, and anyone who might benefit from significantly improving their alfalfa knowledge.

Topics covered include:

- Alfalfa genetics, varieties, variety selection, seed production

- Growth and development, soils, fertility, nitrogen fixation, stress, overwintering
- Diseases, insects, nematodes, and pest management
- Harvest management, drying, silage and hay preservation
- Forage quality, sampling, hay testing
- Marketing, economics, buying and selling hay
- Dairy, beef, and horse nutrition

Class size is limited for this training session, so early registration is recommended. For more information and details on how to register, go to [www.alfalfa.org](http://www.alfalfa.org) (SOURCE: The Haymaker, Summer 2009)

## PERFORMANCE AND PHYSIOLOGY OF YEARLING STEERS GRAZING TOXIC TALL FESCUE AS INFLUENCED BY FEEDING SOYBEAN HULLS AND IMPLANTING WITH STEROIDAL HORMONES

**ABSTRACT** - Ergot alkaloids produced by an endophyte (*Neotyphodium coenophialum*) that infects tall fescue (*Lolium arundinaceum*) adversely affect cattle weight gain and physiology. Sixty-four steers were grazed on endophyte-infected (E+) KY-31 tall fescue for 77 days in 2007 and sixty steers were grazed for 86 days in 2008 to evaluate the combined effects of implantation of steroidal implants and feeding of soybean hulls (SBH) on performance and physiology. With or without feeding pelleted soybean hull (SBH) treatments (5.0 lb/steer/day) were randomly assigned to 6, 7.5-acre pastures. Treatments of with or without ear implantation with steroid hormone (200 mg progesterone – 20 mg estradiol) were assigned to groups of five or six (4 pastures in 2007) steers within each pasture. Average daily gain (ADG), rectal temperature, serum prolactin, and hair coat rating responses to SBH and steroid implants were measured. Feeding SBH and steroid implants had additive effects on ADG. Rectal temperature was highest with feeding SBH, but rectal temperatures were reduced when SBH was combined with steroid implants. Implanting did not affect serum prolactin or hair coat ratings, but steers fed SBH had higher serum prolactin and also had greater frequency of sleek hair coats. The results indicate that SBH in conjunction with implants may increase steer weight gain. In addition, SBH may aid in shedding of rough hair coats of fescue cattle. (SOURCE: J. M. Carter, C. T. Dougherty, and G. E. Aiken IN 2009 AFGC Proceedings & Abstracts, Grand Rapids, MI)

## NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN FORAGE VARIETIES

**ABSTRACT** - Forage crops harvested for hay or haylage or grazed support dairy, beef, sheep and horse production. Additional livestock production from reduced forage acreage supports the need for forage variety improvement. The Consortium for Alfalfa Improvement is a partnership model of government, private non-profit and private profit entities needed to advance long-term, high risk science that potentially will develop large payoffs for ruminant livestock producers. Proof of concept lignin transgenic alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) hay fed in total mixed diets with corn silage measured increased fiber digestibility in both lactating dairy cows and rapidly growing Lambs. Digestible dry matter of one transgenic increased 3.5 % fat corrected milk over its null line by 2.86 lb/hd/day. Alfalfa stems from reduced lignin genotypes increased sugar yield which potentially could increase ethanol > 50% compared to standard alfalfa. Perennial forage legume breeding at U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center (USDFC) is focused on forage legume improvement needs of dairy producers for red clover (*Trifolium pratense*), alfalfa, kura clover (*Trifolium ambiguum*). 'WITT' birdsfoot (*Lotus corniculatus*) trefoil has been released as a variety with improved yield and persistence. Forage grass breeding at USDFRC is focused on developing new varieties of perennial grasses for grazing systems in northern U.S. Research goals are to increase persistence, tolerance to frequent defoliation, palatability and digestibility, and tolerance to environmental stresses. Variety development is reported for "Spring Green" festulolium (*Festulolium bravni*), a hybrid between meadow fescue and ryegrass, 'Hidden Valley' meadow fescue (*Schedonorus pratensis*), and non-heading orchardgrass (*Dactylis glomerata*). (SOURCE: Neal P. Martin, M. Casler, H. Riday and G. Brink IN 2009 AFGC Proceedings & Abstracts, Grand Rapids, MI)

## EXTENDING THE GRAZING SEASON

**ABSTRACT** - For most livestock producers, extending the grazing season for their animals should be a high priority objective.

There are several reasons why this is true. Feeding hay or other stored feed materials in a barn or other enclosed area concentrates animals, and the manure that accumulates requires effort and expense to remove. Feeding livestock in pastures often results in hoof damage to the land that hurts perennial forage stands, encourages weeds, and may cause erosion. The forage quality of pasture growth is usually higher than that of hay, thus resulting in improved animal performance as compared to hay. Finally, because of the labor and machinery required to produce hay or other stored feed and to provide it to animals, stored feed is almost always considerably more expensive than having animals harvest forage by grazing. In fact, one of the best indicators of the cost effectiveness of a livestock operation is the amount of stored feed that is required. Clearly, extending the grazing season and reducing the need for stored feed is highly desirable. The best techniques to accomplish this vary with geographic region, type of farming operation, soil types on which forage crops can be grown, and other factors. Approaches that are used widely and to great advantage in many situations include exploiting growth distribution differences among forage species or varieties, stockpiling forage, grazing crop residues or otherwise taking advantage of unique grazing opportunities, irrigation, and implementation of various grazing management techniques. Minimizing hay storage and feeding losses is not a technique for extending grazing, but can be an important strategy for reducing stored feed needs. (SOURCE: D.M. Ball and G.D. Lacefield IN 2009 AFGC Proceedings & Abstracts, Grand Rapids, MI)

## USE GOATS TO MAKE MONEY AND LOWER COSTS

Are weeds and brush stealing your pasture profits? Interested in turning these money robbers into valuable resources? Stay tuned and learn how.

What do leafy spurge, yucca, cedar trees, and musk thistle have in common? Yes – they all are plants we often consider to be undesirable in our pastures. A couple are even called noxious weeds. And they all are difficult and expensive to spray and kill. But they also might be your most valuable, untapped resource.

How? Well, leafy spurge, yucca, cedar trees, musk thistle, and many other weeds and brush are the preferred feed of goats. Now don't go turning off your radio. I know many of you would never 'lower' yourself to grazing goats. But maybe it's time we reevaluate our bias and figure out how to best use our grazinglands.

Earlier droughts out west have weakened grasses in many areas and led to an explosion in yucca, western ragweed, broom snakeweed, and all sorts of other plants cattle rarely eat. Eastern pastures have their own problems with cedars, thistles, buckbrush, and other weeds. Spraying, digging, or bulldozing often are too expensive. But we need to do something to save our pastures, and goats eat these weeds.

Set aside your pride and think about this for a second. Most grazing operations have enough weeds to add one goat for every cow and not need to reduce cow numbers. Many could add five to ten goats. If these goats eat your weeds, you save money on herbicides. Fewer weeds means more grass for your cattle. And goat kids sell for fifty to one hundred bucks apiece during the November through March holiday season.

Save money, extra grass, and more income. Are you still too proud to even consider using goats on your land? (SOURCE: Bruce Anderson, Extension Forage Specialist, University of Nebraska)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- SEP 3 KFGC Field Day, Anderson County
- SEP 17-19 National Hay Association Annual Conference, Deadwood, SD
- SEP 19 Asbury Draft Horse Day, Asbury College Equine Center, Wilmore, KY
- OCT 8-9 Kentucky Grazing School, Woodford County Extension Office, Versailles
- OCT 29 10<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference, UK Research & Education Center, Princeton

## 2010

- JAN 15 Forages at KCA, Lexington
- FEB 25 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center



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September 2009