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## Forage News [2009-06]

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>

## June 2009

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

### HART COUNTY HAY PRODUCER TO SPEAK AT AFGC

Clayton Geralds, a Hart County hay producer, will represent Kentucky at the American Forage and Grassland Council Forage Spokesman Contest in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The meeting will be held in the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel June 21-23. Clayton is the KFGC 2009 Forage Spokesman. He and his son Christopher operate a commercial hay farm and were recipients of the Charles Schnitzler Alfalfa Producer Award at the 28<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference. Clayton was also a featured speaker at the 29<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference and will host a field day at his farm on July 9, 2009.

### FORAGE WORKERS MEET IN LEXINGTON

For the first time in over a decade, the Southern Pasture and Forage Crop Improvement Conference met in Lexington May 10-12. This conference brings together forage research, teaching and extension personnel from throughout the Southeast along with representatives from industry and representatives of agencies and commodity groups. Congratulations to the Kentucky Forage Team for treating the group to "the best of Kentucky". In addition to the program, tours were provided to Keeneland, Three Chimneys Farm, Anderson Circle farm, and U.K. Animal Research Center in Woodford County.

### NOMINATIONS REQUESTED

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. To nominate someone for a KFGC Award, send a one-page nomination to Dr. Garry Lacefield, [glacefie@uky.edu](mailto:glacefie@uky.edu) or mail to P.O. Box 469, Princeton, KY 42445. If you have any questions, contact Garry or Ray.

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

WOW!!! It's hard to believe we will have our 30<sup>th</sup> consecutive Kentucky Alfalfa Conference next February. The Conference will be at the Cave City Convention Center and the committee is already at work to make this our biggest and best ever. Mark your calendars and plan to attend.

### UK EQUINE FIELD DAY

The 2009 U.K. Equine Field Day will be held June 27 from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. The vent will be held on U.K.'s Maine Chance Equine Campus, Newtown Pike. Participants will learn about equine research being conducted at U.K. and the practical application of this research to horse owners, farm managers, veterinarians, and others interested in the advancement of Kentucky's Horse Industry.

Featured tours and hands-on workshops include:

- Managing problem weeds on horse farms – Dr. Bill Witt
- Degenerative joint disease – Dr. Jamie MacLeod
- Evaluating your feeding program – Dr. Laurie Lawrence
- Vaccination and infectious disease control – Dr. David Horohov
- Is your deworming program working? – Dr. Mary Rossano
- Rotation grazing systems for horses – Dr. Bob Coleman
- Reproductive problems in mares and handling stallion semen – Drs. Ed Squires and Mats Troedsson
- Mud, horses and clean water – Dr. Steve Higgins
- Economic considerations: Does your farm need a "bale-out?" – Kenny Burdine

Admission is free and lunch will be available for purchase. For additional information contact: Equine Initiative, University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture, N212 Ag. Sciences Bldg. North, Lexington, KY 40546-0091 (859-257-2226) or go on the web at: [www.ca.uky.edu/equine](http://www.ca.uky.edu/equine)

### Rotational Grazing – Benefits\*

- Increase in forage production potential (more DM lbs.)
- Increase in forage utilization (30% vs. 70%)
- Increase in carry capacity (0-10% more animals)
- Reduction in supplemental feed use (5-20%)
- Reduction in fertilizer use due to nutrient recycling (0-20%)
- Resting allows legumes and other forage species to grow
- Increase in calf production weights per acre (0-15%)
- Improved animal handling
- Improved animal health
- Provides more grazing flexibility during weather extremes

\*The percentages above represent averages observed by cattle farmers adopting rotational grazing. Start small and gradually increase the number of pastures.

(SOURCE: Dr. Walt Prevatt, Auburn University in: *Proceedings 2009 Mid-South Stocker Conference, Feb. 24-25, Lake Barkley State Resort Park*)

### ADJUST CONDITIONERS FOR MAXIMUM DRYING

If you haven't checked and adjusted your conditioning rolls for a couple of years, do it now before spring fieldwork begins in earnest, advises University of Nebraska forage specialist Bruce Anderson. "Your hay will dry faster and your risk of rain damage will decrease," he says.

Getting alfalfa hay to dry rapidly is one of the biggest challenges of haymaking, Anderson says. The waxy outer layer of alfalfa stems greatly reduces the rate at which moisture can escape. Equipment manufacturers have developed conditioning rolls that should crack or split plant stems so they dry faster. Recently introduced intensive-conditioning systems operate with near-zero clearances so the entire length of stem is crushed. Researchers in several states have shown these intensive systems allow the hay to reach baling moisture a few hours sooner than conventional rolls.

Rolls are designed to turn at different speeds, which causes wear, noise and vibration if sufficient clearance is not maintained. Conventional rolls can be adjusted so the clearance is at the lower end of the manufacturer's recommended range. Typically, this clearance is 1/16". When adjusted this close, conventional rolls help speed hay dry-down almost as much as the new intensive systems, and at a much lower cost, says Anderson. (*eHay Weekly, March 31, 2009*)

## GRAZING CONFERENCE TO BE AT PRINCETON

The 10<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference will be at the UK Research & Education Center in Princeton on October 29. In addition to many topics on grazing issues by outstanding speakers, we will also have the Kentucky Forage Spokesman Contest and present Annual Forage Awards. Exhibits will be present and a Silent Auction will be available throughout the morning. Proceedings, meal, refreshments, and other grazing-related materials are all included in the \$15 registration fee. No pre-registration is required. More details will be available on the program and exhibit space will be available on our website by early August.

## UK FIELD DAY - JULY 23

The University of Kentucky All Commodity Field Day will be July 23 at the Research & Education Center in Princeton. This Field Day truly has something for everyone including agricultural tours, youth activities, family and consumer sciences activities and educational exhibits.

The field day will begin at 8:00 under the big tent. Tours will begin at 8:30 and run continuously until 3:00. No tours will depart after 2:30. There will be eleven (11) different tours running continuously throughout the day. There will be wagon, bus, and walking tours. Back by popular demand is the Station Overview Tour which has attracted the highest number of participants over the years. The Overview Tour is a one hour and fifteen minute tour of research and extension activities at the station with guides discussing points of interest along the way.

In addition to the Overview Tour there will be ten other tours including: Beef Cattle, Equine, Tobacco, Forage, Grain Crops Management, Weed Management in Grain Crops, Fertility Management, Orchard/Vineyard, Vegetable Crops and Small Fruits, Ornamental Horticulture.

There will be a Youth Activities Tent with many agricultural-related (fun) activities for the youngsters including a viewing/petting zoo with many different species of animals. Family and Consumer Science activities and exhibits will be at the UKREC Main Building. There will be over forty educational exhibits in the Exhibit/Display Tent. Exhibits will be open throughout the day with representatives at each booth to visit and discuss items of interest.

## ANDERSON COUNTY TO HOST KFGC FIELD DAY

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for the KFGC Field Day to be held September 3, 2009 on the James R. Smith Farm, 1984 Grafenburg Road in Lawrenceburg. Our thanks to the Smith family for hosting this important educational event and to Field Day Chairman Mr. Tommy Yankey, Anderson County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources. The field day will begin at 4:30 with registration. Tours will begin at 5:15. Tour stops and speakers include:

	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
1	11 Acres of Eastern Gamagrass interseeded with Red Clover and Pasha Forage Turnips for summer grazing	Dr. Glen Aiken
2	Alfalfa/Orchardgrass Hay Production and Management	Dr. Garry Lacefield
3	Field Corn planted for grazing in fall/winter	Tommy Yankey
4	Renovating Fescue Pastures	Dr. Ray Smith
5	Watering Systems for Rotational Grazing	Ralph Quillin
6	Balancing Nutritional Requirements when Grazing Field Corn	Dr. Jeff Lemkhuler

Supper will be served at 7:30 by Anderson County Cattlemen's Association. More details will be available in later issues of Forage News and on our website at [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage).

## KFGC AND HIGH QUALITY FORAGES

The smell of fresh cut hay is an indication of the time of year when Kentucky forage producers are busy harvesting high quality forages. The ultimate test of hay and pasture quality is animal performance (pounds of milk produced, or average daily gain) which is directly related to forage intake, digestibility and nutrient content. Of all factors that affect hay quality, the stage of maturity when harvested is the most important and the one in which farmers can make the greatest progress. As legumes and grasses advance in maturity to the seed production stage, there is a drop in protein and energy and an increase in fiber, therefore resulting in reduced animal performance.

Educating producers about the importance of producing high quality forages is one of the goals of the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council. KFGC's summer field day on September 3 at the Smith Farm in Anderson County will highlight several forage management practices such as renovating pastures with legumes, producing quality alfalfa and orchardgrass hay and using alternative forage crops that have the potential of improving forage quality and profitability. Plan on attending our fall field day and don't forget to check out the KFGC website at [www.kfgc.com](http://www.kfgc.com) and the UK forage website at [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage) for more information on producing quality forages and upcoming forage programs and activities. (SOURCE: Don Sorrell, KFGC President)

## MISCANTHUS - WHAT IS IT?

There has been a fair bit in the news recently about a new biofuel crop called Miscanthus. It is actually not new in the United States, but has been used for years as an tall ornamental grass also known as Chinese silver grass or maiden grass. There are about 10 different species, all originating in China, but the one discussed the most for biofuel is *Miscanthus giganteus*. It is a sterile hybrid that does not produce viable seed, therefore it has to be established using transplants or rhizomes. *Miscanthus giganteus* has been planted in Europe for a number of years as a biofuel crop. Tom Keene recently visited with a company in England using *Miscanthus*, wheat straw, willow, and wood chips for electricity production.

*Miscanthus* joins switchgrass in Kentucky as grasses that have shown good potential as energy crops. Both require time to establish with switchgrass reaching peak production in the third year of the stand and *Miscanthus* requiring four years. *Miscanthus* will produce more tonnage than switchgrass, but unlike switchgrass it does not have an alternative use as a forage crop. We believe that both of these grasses and likely other grass species will be used in coming years for energy production in Kentucky.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

JUN 21-24	American Forage & Grassland Council, Grand Rapids, MI
JUN 27	UK Equine Field Day, UK Maine Chance/Spindletop Research Farm, Lexington
JUL 23	UK All Commodity Field Day, UK Research & Education Center, Princeton
SEP 3	KFGC Field Day, Anderson County
SEP 17-19	National Hay Association Annual Conference, Deadwood, SD
OCT 29	10 <sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference, UK Research & Education Center, Princeton

### 2010

FEB 25	30 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary: Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center
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June 2009