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Forage News [2008-10]

University of Kentucky Department of Plant and Soil Sciences

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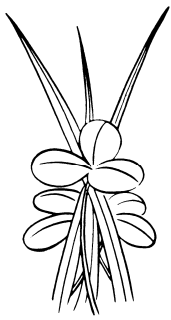


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FORAGE NEWS

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

October 2008

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

KENTUCKY GRAZING CONFERENCE

The 9th Kentucky Grazing Conference will be held October 23 at the Fayette County Extension Office from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. EST.

The program offers an outstanding group of topics and speakers:

- 8:00 Registration, Visit Exhibits, Silent Auction
- 8:30 Welcome – *Dr Gary Palmer*
- 8:45 Growth of Grasses & Legumes: Impact on Grazing – *Dr. Ray Smith*
- 9:00 Forage Legumes vs. Fertilizer Nitrogen – *Dr. Garry Lacefield*
- 9:20 Horse Pasture Monitoring Program: Results After Three Years – *Mr. Tom Keene*
- 9:40 Herbicide Options for Pasture Weed Control – *Dr. J.D. Green*
- 10:00 Break, Visit Exhibits, Silent Auction
- 10:30 Practical Grazing Management and Feed Strategies to Alleviate Fescue Toxicosis – *Dr. Glen Aiken*
- 11:00 Fencing and Watering Systems: Simpler is Better – *Mr. Ralph Quillin*
- 11:30 Supplementing Cattle on Pasture: When, What and How Much? – *Dr. Roy Burris*
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:45 KFGC Business Meeting, KFGC Awards, Silent Auction Results
- 1:15 Forage Spokesman Contest
- 3:00 Adjourn

We are expecting a full house of exhibitors representing seed, feed, chemical, fertilizer, fencing and watering and other educational booths with the latest supplies, services and information on grazing.

The afternoon session will include the Kentucky Forage & Grassland Council Awards Program and the Forage Spokesman Contest.

Registration cost is \$15.00 (\$5.00 for students) and includes proceedings, meal, refreshments, and other educational materials.

Contact Garry Lacefield (glacefie@uky.edu 270-365-7541, Ext. 202), Christi Forsythe (cforsyth@uky.edu 270-365-7541, Ext. 221) or Ray Smith (raysmith1@uky.edu 859-257-3358) if you have any questions.

GRAZING CROP RESIDUES

Many Kentucky farmers can take advantage of various crop residues which are left in the field following grazing crop harvest. These residues provide a low cost source of winter feed for beef cattle.

Permitting animals to graze corn stalks is the most common way of harvesting since it is usually the cheapest and requires less labor and equipment inputs. Whole field grazing limits the degree of utilization, as animals waste a large amount of the residues available through selective grazing, trampling, and over consumption. Restricted grazing through the use of a temporary electric fence will result in more complete utilization. Allowing animal's access to only a portion of the field through the use of an electric fence will force animals to utilize a larger amount of the dry matter thus wasting less.

Another grazing technique which can be used effectively is to allow these animals with the higher nutrient demands (such as young growing animals) to have first access to a stalk field. Follow them with dry cows. This system allows the better quality materials to be selected by the first grazers and forces the lower nutrient requiring dry cows to clean up the remains. **Caution:** (1) there has been cases where too much grain left in the field resulted in animals over-eating and foundering. (2) Prussic acid poisoning has been reported when grazing fields that were infested with johnsongrass. This problem is greatest during the early frost period.

U.K. FORAGE WEBSITE

Have you checked our website recently at www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage? We continue to try and keep it up-to-date with new links added almost weekly. I greatly appreciate all the agents, students, colleagues and friends who provide input, ideas and let us know when links aren't working. Our goal is to make sure this site is helpful to our Kentucky Forage Industry and solicit your input.

KFGC BOARD MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The KFGC board met before the KFGC field day September 4. Several highlights to report from the board meeting. Don Sorrell (county agent in Campbell Co.) will replace Phil Howell as KFGC President starting at the KY Alfalfa Conference Feb. 19, 2008. The board was pleased to hear that the profit split from KFGC's joint sponsorship of the recent AFGC/SRM meeting held in Louisville, KY was \$12,500. Special thanks to all KFGC members and others who helped make this meeting a success. Tom Keene reported that the KFGC sponsored grant for "Biomass and Hay Production" (funded by the Ag. Development Board) continues to go well. Switchgrass has now been planted on 20 farms in NE Kentucky and East KY Power will start burning a portion of the harvested switchgrass for electricity production later this fall. The KFGC board looks forward to seeing all of you at the KY Grazing Conference October 23 at the Fayette County Extension Office.

FROST BRINGS DANGER: PRUSSIC ACID POISONING

As we move into October the likelihood of frost increases. The best way to prevent losses from Prussic Acid is to be aware and plan ahead. The following information will help to be aware and prepared.

The primary cause of hydrocyanic (prussic) acid poisoning in domestic animals is the ingestion of plants containing this potent toxin. Cyanide-producing compounds (cyanogenic glucosides) occurring in living plant cells are converted to prussic acid when cells are crushed or otherwise ruptured.

The prussic acid potential of plants is affected by species and variety, weather, soil fertility and stage of plant growth. Plants of the sorghum group and leaves of wild cherry trees have a potential for

producing toxic levels of prussic acid. There are wide differences among varieties. Some of the sudangrasses are low in prussic acid. Pearl millet is apparently free of prussic acid in toxic amounts.

Cause: Prussic acid is one of the most potent toxins in nature. As ruminants consume plant materials containing cyanide-producing compounds, prussic acid is liberated in the rumen, absorbed into the bloodstream and carried to body tissues where it interferes with oxygen utilization. If toxin is absorbed rapidly enough, the animal soon dies from respiratory paralysis.

Symptoms: When lethal amounts are consumed, dead animals may be found without visible symptoms of poisoning. Symptoms from smaller amounts include labored breathing, irregular pulse, frothing at the mouth and staggering.

Prevention: Forage species and varieties may be selected for low prussic acid potential. The risk from potentially dangerous forages may be reduced by following certain management practices:

1. Graze sorghum or sorghum cross plants only when they are at least 15 inches tall.
2. Do not graze plants during and shortly after drought periods when growth is severely reduced.
3. Do not graze wilted plants or plants with young tillers.
4. **Do not graze for two weeks after a non-killing frost.**
5. **Do not graze after a killing frost until plant materials is dry (the toxin is usually dissipated within 48 hours).**
6. **Do not graze at night when frost is likely.**
7. Delay feeding silage 6 to 8 weeks following ensiling.
8. Do not allow access to wild cherry leaves whether they are wilted or not. After storms, always check pastures for fallen limbs.

When in doubt, don't graze.

KENTUCKY-TENNESSEE COW-CALF CONFERENCE

The KY-TN Cow-Calf Conference will be held at the WKU Expo Center in Bowling Green on October 3, 2008. The conference begins at 8:00 Central time. Registration is \$25 (students \$10) and includes lunch. Program and speakers include:

- 8:00 Trade Show Opens
- 9:00 Grazing Management Systems – Dr. Garry Lacefield
- 10:00 Economics of Grazing Systems – Dr. Kenny Burdine
- 11:00 Cattle Industry Update & Outlook – Cattle Fax
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:45 Risk Management – Dr. Emit Rawls
- 2:45 On the Hoof Cattle Grading & Marketing (hands on) – Warren Beeler

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture Hay Testing Van will be onsite for testing hay brought in by producers.

For more information, contact Chris Milam, Logan County Extension Agent for Agriculture. Participants may pre-register by going to www.dicksoncountyag.com and print a pre-registration form.

DOW AGROSCIENCES BUYS DAIRYLAND SEED

Dow AgroSciences LLC, Indianapolis, IN, has announced it is acquiring Dairyland Seed Co., Inc., a West Bend, WI-based business with plant breeding programs in hybrid corn, soybeans and alfalfa. Dow AgroSciences will also buy Bio-Plant Research, Camp Point, IL, a business affiliated with Dairyland Seed. The primary focus of Bio-Plant is licensing soybean, alfalfa and wheat germ plasm. Founded in 1907, Dairyland Seed Co. has built an established dealer network throughout the Upper Midwest. The company also has international sales in more than 20 countries. Global sales for Dow AgroSciences, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Dow Chemical Company, are \$3.8 billion. The closing is expected later this month. (SOURCE: *eHay Weekly*, August 26, 2008)

COURT DECISION WON'T AFFECT RR ALFALFA STATUS

A federal appeals court in California decided last week to uphold a lower court's ruling temporarily halting plantings of Roundup Ready alfalfa, pending completion of an environmental impact statement (EIS) by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). But the ruling should have no bearing on how soon hay growers again can have access to the transgenic technology, says the head of the company that developed the first Roundup Ready varieties under a licensing agreement with Monsanto.

"The appeal and the development of the EIS are independent processes, so the appeals process should not effect the timetable for a final EIS and a new deregulation decision by APHIS," says Mark McCaslin of Forage Genetics International. McCaslin explains that the appeals case was an argument over a point of law: Did U.S. District Judge Charles Breyer of San Francisco follow required legal standards in May 2007 when he issued a permanent injunction prohibiting any new plantings of Roundup Ready alfalfa seed until USDA completes the EIS?

McCaslin remains optimistic about the future for Roundup Ready alfalfa. Earlier this summer, APHIS predicted it will complete a draft EIS for Roundup Ready alfalfa by the end of this year or in early 2009. See "[Roundup Ready Alfalfa On Track For 2009 Return](#)," *eHay Weekly*, June 16.

Following a public comment period, APHIS will issue a final draft. "Our understanding is that the EIS process is on schedule," says McCaslin.

In last week's legal proceedings, the three-judge panel voted two to one to uphold Breyer's permanent injunction order. Judge Randy Smith, who was raised on an Idaho alfalfa farm, disagreed with the majority. He contended that Breyer should have held an additional hearing to hear from expert witnesses before issuing a nationwide injunction with "severe economic consequences" for the company and customers.

For a full text version of the opinions issued in the appeals case, go to www.ca9.uscourts.gov. Click on Opinions, then Geerston Seed Farms v. Monsanto. (SOURCE: *eHay Weekly*, September 9, 2008)

BALE FEEDER REDUCES WASTE

Farmer-inventor Ted Lacey thinks he's come up with an idea that could save livestock producers big dollars by limiting the amount of hay lost during the round-bale feeding process.

Lacey, of Trent, SD, calls his invention the "Hay Manager," a round-bale feeder that makes use of strategically placed metal rods to keep a bale suspended above the ground while cattle are feeding. "In other round-bale feeders, the hay sits on the ground," explains Lacey. "You can lose a lot of feed at the bottom of the bale to mold. And when cattle pull out hay, it falls outside the feeder so there's waste. With the Hay Manager, the hay sits up off the ground. It stays dry and there's an area where the hay can fall back inside the feeder when the cattle are eating."

Based on results from using the feeder in his own cow-calf operation and with units he's made for neighbors over the years, Lacey figures it can save 10% of the hay fed. "So if you're paying \$90 for a 1,400-lb round bale, you're saving \$9," he calculates. "If you feed a bale a day, you'd save \$900 over a 100-day period. That would almost pay for the feeder. All the savings after that would go right to the bottom line."

This summer, Lacey launched a commercial venture to manufacture and market the feeders. At his first major marketing event, a farm show in Mitchell, SD, he sold more than a dozen of the units. "It was a good start," he says. "We're still in our infancy."

The units, made with 14-gauge metal, carry a price tag of \$950. Lacey is also planning to expand his product line to include feeders for calves, horses and sheep. He has applied for a patent on his design. To learn more, visit thehaymanager.com or phone Lacey at 605-321-9226 or 605-428-5122.

For those who get the September Dairy-Forage Nutrition issue of *Hay & Forage Grower*, see the story, "Waste Not, Want Not," page 32 of that dairy-specific issue. It highlights the bale feeder. (SOURCE: *eHay Weekly*, Sept. 16, 2008)

UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT 23 9th Kentucky Grazing Conference, Fayette County Extension Office, Lexington

2009

JAN 6 Kentucky Small Ruminant Grazing Conference, Fayette County Extension Office

JAN 21-22 Heart of America Grazing Conference, Columbus, IN

FEB 19 29th Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center



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Extension Forage Specialist
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