

11-1-2005

## Forage News [2005-11]

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky

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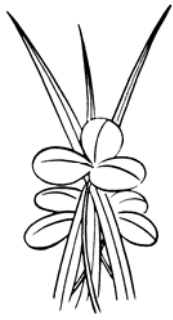
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### Repository Citation

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky, "Forage News [2005-11]" (2005). *Forage News*. 148.

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# FORAGE NEWS

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

**NOVEMBER 2005**

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

## KFGC AWARDS:

### NOMINATIONS DUE BY DECEMBER 14

Award nominations are now being accepted for the annual KFGC Awards to be presented February 23, 2006 at the 26<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference in Lexington. Award categories include: Grassroots Award (Producer)  
Public Service (County)  
Public Service (State)  
Industry

To nominate a person, please send a one page nomination to Dr. Garry Lacefield, Extension Forage Specialist, P.O. Box 469, Princeton, KY 42445 or e-mail [glacefie@uky.edu](mailto:glacefie@uky.edu)

Deadline for nominations is December 14, 2005.

## FORAGES AT KCA

This marks the 11<sup>th</sup> year we have had a Forage Symposium to “kick-off” the Kentucky Cattleman’s Convention. The KCA Convention will return to the Executive Inn and Convention Center in Owensboro January 13-14, 2006. Our forage program will start at 9:00 on January 13. The program features five very timely topics including: Using Legumes to RENEW Grass Pastures – Dr. Garry Lacefield; Roundup Ready Alfalfa, Novel Endophyte Tall Fescue, New Clovers and Bermudagrass and MORE – Dr. Ray Smith; New Developments in Pasture Weed Control – Dr. Bill Witt; How Good is Your Hay? – Mr. Tom Keene; Forage Systems to Minimize Hay & Concentrate Needs – Dr. Glen Aiken

## PROGRAM SET FOR GRAZING CONFERENCE

The Heart of America Grazing Conference will be held at the Cave City Convention Center January 25-26, 2006. This makes the 5<sup>th</sup> year for this very successful educational event. Details concerning the program, along with registration information and lodging are available on our website at [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage). Hard copies of the program are being printed and will be available soon.

## ALFALFA CONFERENCE TO BE IN LEXINGTON

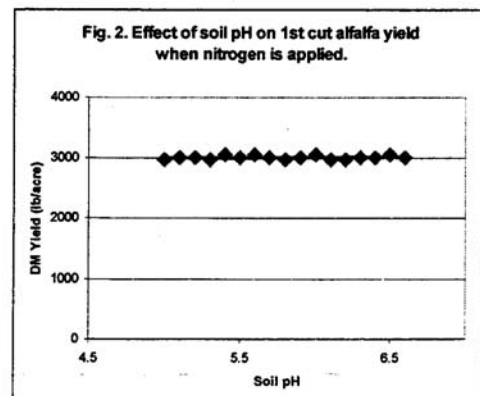
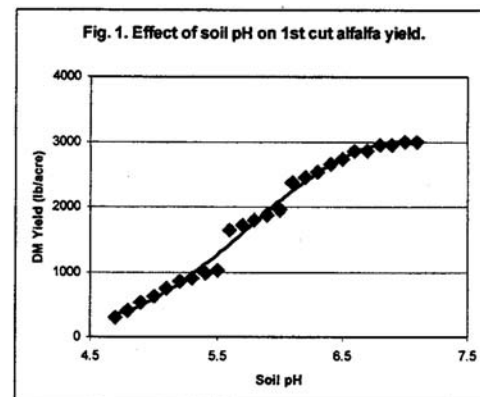
The 26<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference will be held February 23, 2006 at the Fayette County Extension Office in Lexington. Programs are being printed; however, details about the program with topics and speakers are available on our website at [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage).

## HOW SENSITIVE IS ALFALFA TO LOW SOIL pH?

Alfalfa is the most sensitive forage crop to soil pH. It is followed by red clover, white clover, birdsfoot trefoil and then the forage grasses. This pH sensitivity is related primarily to its affect on the nitrogen fixation ability of the plants at low soil pH levels.

At low soil pH the bacteria that lives in legume roots and is responsible for nitrogen fixation are not very active so the crop can suffer from nitrogen deficiency causing reduced yield (Fig. 1). However, if N fertilizer is applied to the low pH soils then alfalfa yield remains high (Fig. 2).

From a practical standpoint it boils down to adding lime to maintain the proper pH or adding nitrogen fertilizer. Economics greatly favor adding lime over adding nitrogen! (SOURCE: *Pennsylvania Forage & Grassland News*, Vol. 15, #4, Fall 2005)



## FERTILIZER VALUE IN HAY

Last month I was at a field day on Anthony Fourshee's farm in Trigg County. Anthony is an excellent farmer and keeps very good records. He shared his practices for making hay and had kept good records on yields, quality and cost of production. He calculated the fertilizer value in both small square and large round bales. The bottom line was approximately one cent per pound. Based on his values, a 50 pound square bale would contain 0.50¢ worth of fertilizer and a 1200 pound round bale would have \$12.00 worth of fertilizer.

## PRUSSIC ACID AND NITRATE POISONING ARE NOT THE SAME

Toxic levels of nitrates result from heavy nitrogen fertilization followed by severe drought stress. Unlike nitrates, prussic acid deteriorates with time. If forage having high levels of prussic acid is ensiled, it will usually be safe to feed within three weeks after silo fill. Hay that has dried enough to be safely baled (18 to 20 percent moisture) will not contain toxic levels of prussic acid. Standing plants killed by frost are normally safe after about one week. However, in some instances only plants in certain portions of a field are initially killed, and subsequent frosts create danger spots in other areas. (SOURCE: *Southern Forages 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition*)

## HAY MAY BE TIGHT

Now that this year's growing season is over, it's an excellent time to evaluate what your stored feed needs are going to be this winter.

Because of our drought situation here in Kentucky, there has been very little second or third cutting hay harvested this year. And, because our drought has continued so long into this fall, stockpiled forages are not going to be able to carry us as far into the winter as usual. Even if the rains start now, the shorter days and much cooler temperatures will not give us the necessary growth for grazing to carry us into January.

Take a good inventory now of your existing stored feeds and determine if you will need to purchase off farm commodities (hay) to get you through to new pasture. If your calculations reveal a need for some purchased stored feeds, I would go ahead and make my purchases soon. The lack of excess hay may make for short supplies come late January and February and short supplies usually mean higher prices.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) has a website, [www.kyagr.com](http://www.kyagr.com), that has a listing of tested hay that is for sale here in Kentucky. If your inventory reveals that you have excess hay for sale, you may want to call KDA and visit with them about having your hay listed on the site as well. Call 1-800-248-4628. (SOURCE: *Tom Keene, UK Hay Marketing Specialist*)

## CONSIDER GRAZING CROP RESIDUE

The dry summer and fall have resulted in a limited hay supply and pasture production for many producers going into winter. One alternative source of feed that is often overlooked is crop residue. Obviously, the field needs a fence around it, but the cost of a temporary electric fence is cheap compared to the forage value of many crop residues. Residue from corn provides more feed per acre and higher quality feed than soybean. Recent research in Missouri showed that the cost of winter hay feeding can be \$1.32 per cow per day vs. the cost of grazing corn residue at \$0.05 per cow per day. Following you will find several considerations when grazing corn residue.

**Production and quality of corn residue** - A 100 bushel corn grain yield can produce 2-3 tons of residue. This is approximately two to three times more residue than soybeans. Although the digestibility of corn stalks is less than 50%, the leaves, husk and cobs average 58-60%. Crude protein is 7% in

corn leaves and 2-4% in cobs and stalks. The energy value of corn residue is more than adequate for dry cows, but some protein supplementation may be required

**Utilization** - The best way to utilize corn residue is by limiting grazing. Temporary electric fence is the easiest way to limit grazing, and this can double the amount of residue consumed by reducing selective grazing and trampling damage. An acre of corn that produced 100 or more bushels per acre can provide 35-50 days of grazing per cow.

**Potential for nitrates** - In a drought year like 2005 there is a potential for nitrate toxicity when utilizing corn residue. Fortunately, cattle graze the leaves and upper plant parts first, and nitrates accumulate in the lower third of the stalk. Consequently, animals should not be forced to consume the lower 1/3 to 1/2 of the stalk when high nitrates are suspected. Since the lower portion of the stalk is also the lowest quality plant part, leaving it behind will also improve animal weight gain. Most forage quality labs also test for nitrate concentration.

Before you buy expensive hay this winter, consider what crop residues you have available on your farm or on a neighbors farm.

## EVER BEEN TO A HAY AUCTION.....?

If not, don't miss out on an opportunity to see a first class hay auction on Saturday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at the BuffaloTrace Auction facility. Also, join us earlier that day at 9:30 AM for our Equine Seminar prior to the Auction. This program will have an emphasis on horses and horse hay. The program for the seminar is found in this issue of the Forage News.

The facility is located at: 6031 KY HWY 3170, Maysville, KY 41056. It is just outside of Maysville, KY just a short distance off of the AA highway. We hope to see you there.

### Buffalo Trace Area Pre-Auction Program December 3, 2005

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| 9:30 AM  | Registration  |
| 10:00 AM | Preparing to Grow Top Quality Hay in 2006 - Dr. Ray Smith, UK Extension Forage Specialist         |
| 10:20 AM | Is Kentucky Produced Hay Good Enough for My Horses? - Dr. Laurie Lawrence, UK Equine Nutritionist |
| 10:40 AM | Selling Quality Horse Hay at Auction - Rick Alexander, Coordinator, Commodity Growers Co-op.      |
| 11:00 AM | Testing Hay for Horses; Is it necessary? - Tom Keene, UK, Hay Specialist                          |
| 11:20 AM | Kentucky Department of Agriculture Hay Testing: How does it work? - Kim Field, KDA                |
| 11:30 AM | Visit with Speakers<br>Inspect KDA Van<br>Inspect Hay Lots for Sale                               |
| 12:00 PM | Auction Starts  |

(SOURCE: *Tom Keene, UK Hay Marketing Specialist*)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| JAN 13    | Forages at KCA, Executive Inn, Owensboro   |
| JAN 13-14 | Kentucky Cattleman Association Convention, Executive Inn, Owensboro                      |
| JAN 25-26 | Heart of America Grazing Conference, Cave City Convention Center,                        |
| FEB 23    | 26 <sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Fayette County Extension Office, Lexington |
| MAR 10-14 | American Forage & Grassland Council, San Antonio, TX                                     |



Garry D. Lacefield  
Extension Forage Specialist  
November 2005