Forage News [2004-03]

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky

Follow this and additional works at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/forage_news

Part of the Plant Sciences Commons

Right click to open a feedback form in a new tab to let us know how this document benefits you.

Repository Citation
https://uknowledge.uky.edu/forage_news/168

This Newsletter is brought to you for free and open access by the Plant and Soil Sciences at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in Forage News by an authorized administrator of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.
FORAGE NEWS
MARCH 2004
Garry D. Lacefield, Extension Forage Specialist ● Christi Forsythe, Secretary

UK FORAGE EXTENSION WEBSITE
The first edition of the UK Forage Extension Website is now a reality. My thanks to Chad Lee, Greg Schwab, Mike Collins and John James for their help in getting this project off the ground. I also want to thank Christi Forsythe for all she has done and will continue to do to keep the site up-to-date. Special thanks are extended to Sandie Waddell who has worked tirelessly to pull all the information together. This site is a work in progress and will feature announcements of our upcoming events, our monthly newsletter, forage-related publications and proceedings following our educational events. In addition, we have listed a group of “links” that will offer additional forage information. We ask your help in offering “links” that you find helpful and suggestions on ways we can make this site more useful to you. Check it out at http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/.

ALFALFA AWARD WINNERS
Kentucky Alfalfa Awards were presented at the 24th Kentucky Alfalfa Conference in Cave City on February 26. The 2004 Alfalfa Award recipients were:
Charlie Schnitzler Producer Award – Minos Cox
Warren Thompson Industry Award – Gary Coughlin
Gary Lacefield Public Service Award – Mike Collins
Congratulations Minos, Gary and Mike – we are very proud of and for you.

HEART OF AMERICA GRAZING CONFERENCE
Over 300 people from several states attended and participated in the Heart of America Grazing Conference in Evansville, Indiana January 21-22. Chairman Allen Ullom and the entire committee did a great job in organizing and implementing this year’s Conference. Dr. Temple Grandin, Animal Behavior Specialist for Colorado State University was the keynote speaker. Eleven other speakers from five states addressed grazing topics throughout the day. The 3rd Heart of America Grazing Conference will be in Ohio next January. More details to follow.

NATIVE GRASSES
Interest in the use of native grasses for forage production continues to grow in Kentucky. I personally have been involved in research and demonstrations with several species such as switchgrass, eastern gamagrass, big bluestem and indiangrass for about 20 years. That experience has suggested that switchgrass and eastern gamagrass have the most potential for forage production in Kentucky. A dependable source of good quality, Kentucky grown seed has been a problem. We’re fortunate to now have some seed being produced in Kentucky. We did some testing with one producer in Hart County in 2003. Though preliminary, the results of those tests showed good yield potential for several Kentucky ecotypes. Samples are currently being analyzed for forage quality. A supply of locally grown seed will make it easier for farmers to establish good stands of native grasses. (Monroe Rasnake, Extension Agronomist, University of Kentucky)

BROOMSEDGE IN PASTURES
Broomsedge is a common weed problem in pastures in Kentucky and many other states in the Southeast U.S. Poor soil fertility is a contributing factor in most of these fields. Summaries of soil tests conducted by the UK labs show that at least half the pasture and hay fields in Kentucky are low in phosphorus and/or soil pH. However, low fertility is not the only reason for broomsedge problems. We recently conducted demonstrations on two broomsedge infested fields in West Kentucky. Both had good stands of tall fescue, but very few clovers. One of the fields had excellent fertility and the only treatment was renovation with clover. The second was low in fertility and the treatments chosen were poultry litter, commercial fertilizer, lime and renovation with clover. Broomsedge stands were reduced in both fields one year after the treatments were applied. Our conclusion from these experiences is that broomsedge can be controlled by using practices that help keep desirable forages (especially tall fescue) growing vigorously.

Good soil fertility is a basic first step. A good supply of nitrogen – either from clovers or properly timed fertilizer applications – is also necessary. Finally, good grazing management, including rotational grazing, must be practiced. (Monroe Rasnake, Extension Agronomist, University of Kentucky)

ALFALFA AWARD WINNERS

Kentucky Alfalfa Awards were presented at the 24th Kentucky Alfalfa Conference in Cave City on February 26. The 2004 Alfalfa Award recipients were:
Charlie Schnitzler Producer Award – Minos Cox
Warren Thompson Industry Award – Gary Coughlin
Gary Lacefield Public Service Award – Mike Collins
Congratulations Minos, Gary and Mike – we are very proud of and for you.

HEART OF AMERICA GRAZING CONFERENCE

Over 300 people from several states attended and participated in the Heart of America Grazing Conference in Evansville, Indiana January 21-22. Chairman Allen Ullom and the entire committee did a great job in organizing and implementing this year’s Conference. Dr. Temple Grandin, Animal Behavior Specialist for Colorado State University was the keynote speaker. Eleven other speakers from five states addressed grazing topics throughout the day. The 3rd Heart of America Grazing Conference will be in Ohio next January. More details to follow.

HOW CAN QUALITY ANALYSES BE DIFFERENT BETWEEN LABS?
“I collected two samples from the same load of hay, sent them to two labs, and got different quality analyses back. Which lab is correct?” This is an all too common concern or question that I hear from dairymen and hay producers. To deal with this problem, the terms accuracy and precision must be addressed. Accuracy is a measure of the ability of the ability of a procedure to measure or predict the “true” value. In forage analysis, accuracy implies how closely the quality measurements of the submitted sample compare to the “true” quality of the load of forage it came from. Precision or repeatability is a measure of the ability of an analytical procedure to repeatedly provide the same result for a given sample.

Accuracy of forage analysis is limited by the weakest link in the analytical procedure which is sample collection (Table 1). The highest level of accuracy we can expect from a single sample is plus or minus 1.58, 2.45, and 4.25 percentage units for CP, ADF, and NDF, respectively. This relatively low degree of accuracy is due to the inability to obtain a sample that truly represents the load of hay from which the sample is collected.
In general, the results of this study indicate that beef cattle at its production cost. Costs were generally about 20 cents per pound in these studies when the corn was valued.

Managing grazing for maximum grain utilization may result in lower occurrence with a GE of 93.7%. In year 2, a GE of 99% on one farm occurred with a GE of 73% while the lowest ADG of 1.66 lbs in year 1, the highest Average Daily Gain (ADG) 2.22 lbs and appeared to be related to grazing efficiency and grain yield. On farms where the opportunity cost of corn is low or approaches cost of production, grazing the corn appears to have merit. This is not a clear-cut economic decision. Yield potential, alternative markets for corn, alternative uses for the land, and other factors may influence this decision. A copy of this entire report is available at www.ca.uky.edu/robinsonstation

So why do laboratories report different quality when sent the "same" sample? More than likely it is because the samples were not really the same! Since accuracy of sample collection is so much lower (higher standard error) than precision of the analytical procedures (Tables 1 & 2), sample collection is the limiting factor in the ability of different laboratories to produce identical quality results for samples collected from the same load of hay.

In summary, the main reason for quality results differing between labs is that they did not receive identical samples. Sample collection is the major source of variability in forage quality analyses. Improving the precision of laboratory analyses is mainly academic, because errors in sample collection will mask any improvement in analyses. (SOURCE: Dr. Marvin Hall, IN Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland News, Vol. 14, No. 1, Winter 2004)

EXTENDING THE GRAZING SEASON WITH CORN

Grazing is the cheapest way to feed cattle on a cost per pound of nutrient basis. Extending the grazing season would enable producers to reduce cost and expand production with little or no impact on the environment.

Corn is not a traditional grazing crop in Kentucky, but results from several on-farm trials in southeastern Kentucky suggest significant increases in animal production per unit of land area from grazing standing mature corn during late fall/early winter are possible and economical.

In 2001, the Pulaski County Beef Cattle Association received a Southern Region SARE Producer Grant to study the agronomics, animal performance and economics of grazing stocker cattle on corn for a two year period. Three producers in Pulaski County and 1 producer in Laurel Co planted no-till corn following UK fertilization and weed control recommendations for late season grazing.

Corn grain yields during this two year study period averaged 82.9 and 82.3 bu/ac in 2002 and 2003, respectively. The corn grazing period varied from farm to farm by ranged from early September thru mid-February in 2001 and early September thru early April in 2002. Grazing efficiency (GE) of the grain portion of the crop averaged 78.1 % in year 1 and 80.8% in year two. Grazing efficiency did not appear to be related to grazing date but more influenced by the combination of stocking density and grazing days. The decision to terminate corn grazing in a given field was based entirely on the producer’s assessment of the amount of corn remaining and the rate of cattle intake.

In year 1, the highest Average Daily Gain (ADG) 2.22 lbs occurred with a GE of 73% while the lowest ADG of 1.66 lbs occurred with a GE of 93.7%. In year 2, a GE of 99% on one farm resulted in an ADG of 1.12 lbs. These results suggest that managing grazing for maximum grain utilization may result in lower ADG and possible weight loss.

The economic benefit of grazing standing corn crops with stocker beef cattle are quite variable. Cost of gain ranged from 44 to 54 cents per pound in these studies when the corn was valued at its production cost. Costs were generally about 20 cents per pound higher when the corn was valued at its opportunity cost.

In general, the results of this study indicate that beef cattle grazing standing mature corn can be a profitable option for extending the grazing season in southeastern Kentucky. During this two year study period, no herd health problems such as founder were observed. Animal performance measured as average daily gain was highly variable ranging from 1.05 to 2.47 lbs and appeared to be related to grazing efficiency and grain yield. On farms where the opportunity cost of corn is low or approaches cost of production, grazing the corn appears to have merit. This is not a clear-cut economic decision. Yield potential, alternative markets for corn, alternative uses for the land, and other factors may influence this decision. A copy of this entire report is available at www.ca.uky.edu/robinsonstation

AFGC IN VIRGINIA

The 2004 AFGC Conference will be held from June 12-16 in Roanoke, Virginia. You will be staying at the Hotel Roanoke, "The grand Old Lady" of the Valley, where the "peanut soup" is always hot and the welcome mat is always out. The conference site is in the Roanoke River valley, nestled between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains. Roanoke is just minutes from the Blue Ridge Parkway and less than 30 minutes form the Appalachian Trail. The Roanoke Valley is part of the Valley of Virginia running along both sides of Interstate 81 from Maryland to Tennessee. History abounds through the Valley of Virginia – a home to Pre-Revolutionary war explorations by Thomas Jefferson’s father and George Washington and Civil War battlefields and museums are just around the next corner.

While you’re enjoying the scenery of Virginia you’ll have a cornucopia of programs and activities to participate in, learn about and/or just socialize with people who share a common interest in forages. Some of the activities you might enjoy are:

- The pre-conference Golf Tournament
- Sunday’s tour of the McCormick Farm (Virginia Tech Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Research and Extension Center) and innovative farms in the Shenandoah Valley.
- “Producer Day” highlighting Forage and Livestock Production: tall fescue management, harvesting quality forages, nutrient management, grazing for dairy herds, and equine forage symposium.
- Successful Producers in the 21st Century (Forage spokesperson Contest).
- An all new session seeking input on forage research priorities.
- Learn about tall fescue during the day and be entertained by the bluegrass band “Fescue” (Grass the Way it Ought to Be Played) during Virginia Night. Your palate will be satiated by the variety of “Virginia’s Finest” foods.
- “Scientific Day” will highlight a broad variety of topics on forage and pasture management, quality, economics, and utilization; animal nutrition; soil fertility and plant nutrition; forage genetics; and forage education projects.
- Virginia provides the ideal setting to consider additional scientific topics like – computer applications; biomass production; silvopasture; forage for equine, dairy grazing, wildlife habitat, and nutrient management.
- We wish you’d all stay for the Post-Conference Tour of Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello, Appomattox (where the Civil War ended) and the D-Day Memorial, or visit other nearby historical sites around Virginia; you might not get this chance again.

Conference details and registration information will be posted on the conference web site http://www.conted.vt.edu/afgc/ . For your convenience, conference registration and hotel reservations can be completed online, just visit the conference web site. You can still call or mail in all registration and reservations.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APR 20-21  Kentucky Grazing School, Hardin County
JUN 12-16 American Forage & Grassland Council, Roanoke, VA
JUN 24  KFGC Field Day, Russell Hackley Farm, Grayson County
OCT 3-7  Native Warm Season Grass Conference, Shelbyville

Garry D. Lacefield

Extension Forage Specialist
March 2004