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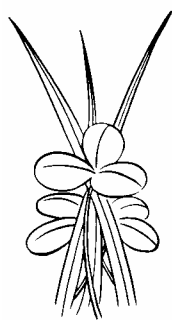
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FORAGE NEWS

March 2003

Garry D. Lacefield and Jimmy C. Henning, Extension Forage Specialists • Christi Forsythe, Secretary

CENTRAL KENTUCKY ALFALFA CONFERENCE

The Central Kentucky Alfalfa Conference will be held Tuesday, March 11, 2003 at the Fayette County Extension Office in Lexington. The program committee has put together a very timely program:

Program

- 9:15 Welcome
- 9:30 Alfalfa: A bright part of Kentucky's agricultural future – *Garry Lacefield*
- 10:00 Update on alfalfa varieties for Kentucky – *Jimmy Henning*
- 10:30 Break to visually rate hay samples
- 11:00 Making profits from alfalfa – *Jason Sandefur*
- 11:30 Understanding alfalfa quality – *Garry Lacefield*
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 Evaluation of hay samples: panel discussion – *Donna Amaral-Phillips, Bob Coleman, Tom Keene*
- 1:45 Growing quality hay – *George Eckler*
- 2:15 Alfalfa hay and MRLS: What we know after on year of testing – *Jimmy Henning*
- 2:45 Summary – *Jimmy Henning*
- 3:00 Adjourn

A registration fee of \$10.00 includes refreshments, meal, proceedings and other educational materials.

CONGRATULATIONS ALFALFA AWARD WINNERS

Our heartfelt congratulations go to four outstanding "Alfalfa Enthusiast" who were recognized as award recipients at the 23rd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference in Cave City on February 20.

Recipients are:

- Charlie Schnitzler Alfalfa Producer Award – Mr. Lee Robey
- Warren Thompson Alfalfa Industry Award – Mr. Phil Rowland
- Garry Lacefield Alfalfa Public Service Award – Dr. Jimmy Henning and Dr. Monroe Rasnake
- Congratulations Lee, Phil, Jimmy & Monroe!

23RD KENTUCKY ALFALFA CONFERENCE

Over 190 people from 11 states participated in the 23rd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference held February 20 at the Cave City Convention Center. Participants had the opportunity to visit with 26 exhibitors, bid on silent auction materials, enjoy a delicious meal and hear and learn from some of the leading "alfalfa enthusiast" in the Country. Highlighting the morning program was Mr. Alfalfa, Mr. Warren Thompson, who shared "Alfalfa: Reflections After 60 Years". In addition, a world renowned alfalfa breeder, Dr. Jim Moutray, shared his knowledge, experience, and vision in "Developing Better Alfalfa Varieties". We were most fortunate to have the National Forage Spokesman our own Mr.

Jason Sandefur to speak on "Alfalfa as a Summer Grazing Crop". The afternoon session offered three breakout sessions including: Weed & Diseases Management, Alfalfa Haylage and Making-Testing-Marketing Alfalfa.

CONGRATS TO KENTUCKY ALFALFA HAY CONTEST WINNERS!

Twelve Kentucky farms and farm families were recognized for high quality alfalfa hay production at the 23rd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference at Cave City. Any alfalfa or alfalfa-grass hay tested by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture during 2002 was automatically entered in the contest. Hay samples were compared on the sum of Crude Protein and Relative Feed Value. Awards were given for the best alfalfa and alfalfa-grass hay tested each month from May to October. Champion samples of each type were also named. The pure alfalfa class winners were: Mike Brown, John McCoy, Bill Folz, Charles Powell and Son, Chris Swayze and Stadelman Farm. The alfalfa-grass class winners were: Ron McCormick, Jason Smith, SLJ Farms, Charles Powell and Son, Joe Hobbs, and Gerald Woods. The champion alfalfa and alfalfa-grass hay entries for 2002 were Chris Swayze and SLJ Farms, respectively. Congratulations to these excellent hay producers. Special thanks to Allen Johnson and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture for their help in identifying the winners.

FORAGE VARIETY TEST REPORTS AVAILABLE LOCALLY AND ON WEB

The latest forage variety performance reports are available either from your local county extension office or on the College of Agriculture Web Site. This includes yield trials for alfalfa and red clover. If you go to the web, use the following url: <http://www.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/respubs.htm>

If you are starting from the College of Agriculture web site (www.ca.uky.edu) then click on 'Publications' (middle left side of the screen) and then on 'Research Reports' located under Online Publications. Then scroll down to the PR (progress report section). Good luck with your spring plantings.

NITROGEN ON GRASS

Short hay supplies during a bad winter that doesn't seem to want to go away have many struggling for answers to forage supply questions. Several considerations for overall forage improvement include: adding clover to badly damaged pastures can pay big dividends, adding a low rate of nitrogen to grass pastures about the time of green-up can permit grazing 1 to 2 weeks earlier than non-nitrated pastures; and adding nitrogen after green-up can dramatically increase first harvest hay yields.

SPRING OATS

We have had many questions about spring oats over the past few weeks. The following information will be of help in evaluating this option:

Oats are the only one of the small grains which have spring varieties adaptable to Kentucky. Spring seeding of winter varieties will result in very low yields since winter varieties require vernalization for reproductive growth. Forage yields of spring oats may be substantially lower than those of the winter oat varieties. Even though spring oats are typically 10 days to two weeks later than winter wheat in maturity, quality is comparable to winter wheat high quality at the boot stage (Table 1).

Spring oats can be used for hay, silage, or as a companion crop for spring-seeded legumes and grasses. The normal rate of seeding (2.5-3 bu/ac) should be reduced by one bushel per acre when other forages are seeded with it. Spring oats should be sown as soon as the ground can be worked in later winter or early spring. Seeding in February or early March when soil conditions permit increases the chances for high yields. Spring oats may be seeded as late as early April for establishing temporary ground cover as a companion crop.

Table 1. Relative Differences in Growth Stage Development, Yield and Nutritive Quality of Various Small Grain Species¹

Species	Average Date for Growth Stage					
	Boot	Headed	Bloom	$\frac{1}{2}$ Seed	Milk	Soft Dough
Barley ²	4/19	4/22	5/4	5/11	5/18	5/26
Rye	4/29	5/2	5/9	5/17	5/23	6/1
Wheat	5/13	5/19	5/23	5/31	6/6	6/11
Triticale	5/15	5/19	5/26	6/3	6/10	6/14
Oat	5/21	5/28	5/31	6/5	6/12	6/16

Yield T/Ac @ 35% D.M.						
Rye	7	8	9	10	11	11
Wheat	7	8	10	10	11	12
Triticale	8	10	11	12	13	13
Oat	4	5	6	8	8	9

Crude Protein %						
Rye	13	11	9	7	6	5
Wheat	10	10	8	9	7	6
Triticale	11	9	8	7	6	5
Oat	12	10	9	9	8	7

Total Digestible Nutrients %						
Rye	63	52	46	45	47	50
Wheat	60	59	53	54	56	56
Triticale	56	46	46	45	50	52
Oat	65	60	53	53	56	57

¹Average values of several years' research data from University of Kentucky, Agronomy Department.

²No forage quality data for barley reported due to lack of research data and its limited use as a forage crop.

(SOURCE: Excerpted from AGR-160, *Managing Small Grains for Livestock Forage*, D.C. Ditsch and M.J. Bitzer, Dept. of Agronomy, University of Kentucky)

I CAN'T WAIT FOR LAFAYETTE, LA

The American Forage and Grassland Council's (AFGC) Annual Convention will be held this year in Lafayette, LA starting on Saturday April the 26th running through April 29th. And for one, I will be glad to go somewhere with warm weather. The winter of '02-'03 can't depart soon enough for me.

The Convention this year will have something for everyone in the entire family; seminars and symposiums, forage tours and golf, a virtual smorgasbord of Cajun food and authentic Southern Hospitality. A good time will be had by all. You can find out all the details in the current issue of the Forage Leader or go to

www.AFGC.org. You can also print a registration form from on line and then fax it to the national headquarters if you would like to register that way.

In Lafayette, LA, Jimmy Thompson from Monroe County, KY will be representing the state of Kentucky along with KFGC as our Forage Spokesperson Contestant. Jimmy will be trying to make it three in a row for Kentucky as Russell Hackley (current AFGC Board Member) won in 2001 and Jason Sandefur won in 2002. As you can see, Kentucky is proud to sponsor and share its young leadership throughout all of AFGC.

AFGC continues to work hard to provide a voice for forages throughout this great country of ours. Be sure to always check out the Forage Leader for the up-to-date issues that AFGC spearheads. Just in the last few months, AFGC has contracted with SRM (Society for Range Management) to open an office in Washington, DC. This should allow our entire membership a stronger voice in congressional issues that face forage agriculture. AFGC is working extremely hard to sponsor another joint meeting with SRM possibly in 2008 or 2009. If any of you had the chance to attend the one in Omaha, NE in 1999, you know what a tremendous success it was. AFGC's leadership will be participating in "Cultivating Leadership for a Changing Agriculture: Shared Leadership II". This Leadership training follows the first workshop held last October in which the AFGC Leadership participated in and honestly, brought back several leadership initiatives to the AFGC Board which have already been acted on and implemented.

As forage agriculture continues to change, won't you be one of the leaders that molds that change for the betterment of Kentucky forage producers as well as for producers across this entire country?

REMEMBER: STAY ACTIVE IN KFGC and EAGERLY SUPPORT AFGC. (Tom Keene, Vice President, America Forage and Grasslands Council)

KENTUCKY GRAZING SCHOOL

The Spring Kentucky Grazing School is scheduled for April 22-23 in Bowling Green at the Western Kentucky University Expo Center. The registration fee is \$100 and includes all materials, grazing manual, *Southern Forage* book, Forage Crop Pocket Guide, breaks, and selected meals. Registration fee must be paid to hold a place in the grazing school. Enrollment is limited to the first 45 who register. The school is open to all. To register, make checks payable to Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council and send to Ken Johnson, NRCS, P.O. Box 700, Tompkinsville, KY 42167 (Phone 270-487-6589, Ext. 3) or contact Garry Lacefield at 270-365-7541, Ext. 202).

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAR 11	Central Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Lexington
APR 22-23	Kentucky Grazing School, Bowling Green
APR 26-30	American Forage & Grassland Conference, Lafayette, Louisiana
JUN 12	UK Agronomy Field Day, Lexington
JUL 17	UK All Commodity Field Day, Robinson Station, Quicksand
JUL 24	South Central Kentucky Agriculture Field Day, Bowling Green

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Extension Forage Specialists
March 2003