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Forage News [2002-05]

University of Kentucky Department of Plant and Soil Sciences

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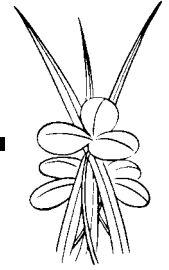
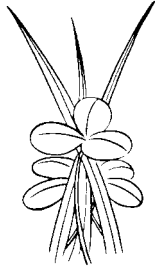
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FORAGE NEWS



In this month's issue:

! KY Grazing School ! How much Can you Afford to Pay for a Hay Barn? ! 23rd KY Alfalfa Conference ! Stockpiled Tall Fescue Provides Lower Cost Wintering System ! First Hay Cut Approaching ! Upcoming Events

May 2002

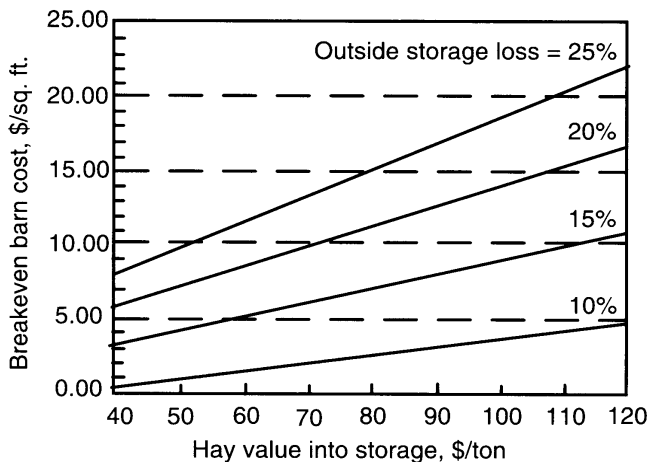
Garry D. Lacefield and Jimmy C. Henning, Extension Forage Specialists ! Christi Forsythe, Secretary

KENTUCKY GRAZING SCHOOL SETS RECORD

The Spring Kentucky Grazing School was held in Lincoln County, April 17 & 18. Local arrangements chairman, Dan Grigson and his staff, did an excellent job in hosting the school. Fifty people attended the two-day school setting a new attendance record. Our THANKS to all who made the school such a success.

HOW MUCH CAN YOU AFFORD TO PAY FOR A HAY BARN?

The following figure provides breakeven cost for barn construction at various hay loss levels, costs/square foot, and hay value:



Breakeven barn cost for various levels of storage loss and varying hay value at harvest. (Inputs other than storage loss and hay value are not included.)

Note: This analysis includes the following assumptions: in-barn stacking height of 3 bales, 10-year barn life, and barn construction cost of \$7.50/sq.ft.

(SOURCE: Forage Crop Pocket Guide, D.M. Ball, C.S. Hoveland and G.D. Lacefield published by Potash & Phosphate Institute/Foundation for Agronomic Research, Second Printing, March 2000)

23RD KENTUCKY ALFALFA CONFERENCE SET FOR FEBRUARY 20, 2003

The 23rd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference has been set for February 20, 2003. It will be held at the remodeled Cave City Convention Center. With the extra room, we will be able to expand the trade show and have afternoon breakout sessions. Mark your calendar for Thursday, February 20, 2003 and plan to join us in Cave City.

STOCKPILED TALL FESCUE PROVIDES LOWER COST WINTERING SYSTEM FOR FALL CALVING COWS

Stockpiled tall fescue dominant pastures have been shown to provide low cost opportunity for wintering dry, pregnant spring calving cows. There has been some question whether stockpiled pasture would provide adequate nutrition for lactating cows during the winter months. The first year of this study has clearly shown the adequacy of the diet. The primary input cost for stockpiled pasture is nitrogen fertilizer.

The table below shows results of work conducted by Jim Gerrish and his staff at the University of Missouri Forage Systems Research Center. It confirms the important role for stockpiling.

Cost of forage source, cow maintenance, and calf gain for two alternative winter forage systems.		
	Stockpiled pasture	Hay
Forage cost	\$22.33/acre	\$56.00/ton
Days on pasture	125	
Cost per day on pasture	\$0.29	
Days on hay		147
Cost per day on hay	\$1.23	\$1.23
Wintering cost per cow	\$63.31	\$180.81
Wintering cost/cow/day	\$0.43	\$1.23
Cost per lb of calf gain	\$0.188	\$0.609*

*Does not include creep feed cost which was about 6.5 ¢/lb of gain

SOURCE:Gerrish, Jim. 2002. Forage System Update, Vol. 11, #2.



FIRST HAY CUT APPROACHING

As we approach our first hay harvest for this growing season, many decisions will be made that impact yield and quality. Of all the controllable factors, stage of plant maturity when harvested will have the greatest impact on hay quality. Consider the following:

Stage of Harvest	Dry Matter Intake lb/day	Percent Digestibility	Percent Protein	lb of Hay Fed per lb Gain	lb of Gain per day
Late boot to head, cut May 3	13.0	68	13.8	10.1	1.39
Early bloom stage, May 14	11.7	66	10.2	13.5	.97
Early milk stage—seed forming, May 25	8.6	56	7.6	22.5	.42

*Holstein heifers were used, average weight: 500 pounds.
SOURCE: Personal Communication, Monty Montgomery, University of Tennessee.

	Good	Fair	Poor
Crude Protein	18.7	15.9	13.7
Crude Fiber	29.4	35.4	46.7
Animal Performance			
Hay Consumed, lb/day	17.1	16.5	13.8
Gain, lb/day	1.85	1.49	-0.06

*550 lb beef steers
SOURCE: A.S. Mohammed et al., 1967. Tennessee Farm and Home Science Progress Report 61. Pages 10-13. University of Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station, Knoxville.

Stage of Harvest	Protein (%)	Average daily gain per animal (lb)
Boot	18	2.0
Full head	12	1.4
Milk	9	0.4

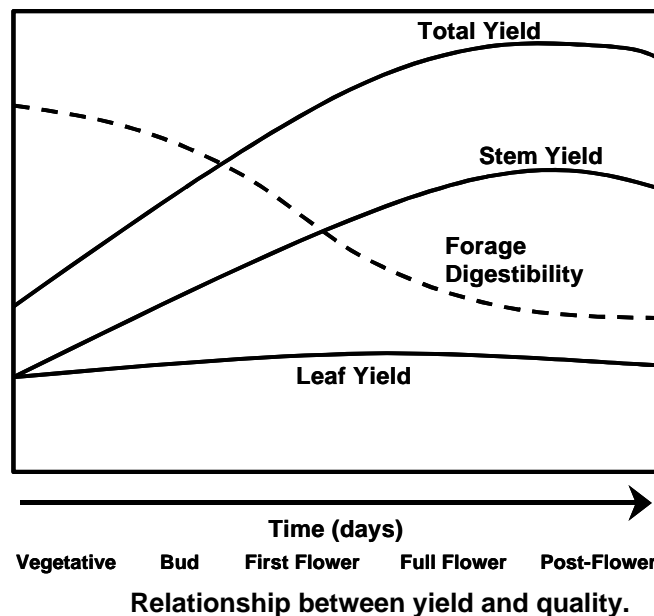
SOURCE: University of Tennessee

Cutting Interval	Daily dry matter intake per animal (lb)	Percent digestibility (%)	Average daily gain per animal (lb)
4 weeks	11.8	55	1.2
8 weeks	9.3	53	0.9
13 weeks	9.5	45	0.0

SOURCE: Georgia Ag. Research

Plant Species	Time of Harvest
Alfalfa	Late bud to first flower for first cutting, first flower to 1/10 bloom for second and later cuttings.
Bluegrass, Orchardgrass, Tall Fescue, or Timothy	Boot ¹ to early head stage for first cut, aftermath cuts at 4- to 6-week intervals.
Red Clover or Crimson Clover	First flower to 1/10 bloom.
Oats, Barley, or Wheat	Boot to early head stage.
Rye and Triticale	Boot stage or before.
Soybeans	Mid- to full-bloom and before bottom leaves begin to fall.
Annual Lespedeza	Early bloom and before bottom leaves begin to fall.
Ladino Clover or White Clover	Cut at correct stage for companion plant.
Sudangrass, Sorghum Hybrids, Pearl Millet, and Johnsongrass	40-inch height or early boot stage, whichever comes first.
Bermudagrass	Cut when height is 15 to 18 inches.
Caucasian Bluestem, Big Bluestem, Indiangrass, and Switchgrass	Boot to early head stage.

¹Boot is stage of growth of a grass just prior to seedhead emergence. This stage can be identified by the presence of an enlarged or swollen area near the top of the main stem.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- JUL 14-16 American Forage & Grassland Conference, Minnesota
- JUL 18 UK All Commodity Field Day, Princeton
- 2003 FEB 20 23rd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City

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May 2002