



12-1-2001

## Forage News [2001-12]

University of Kentucky Department of Plant and Soil Sciences

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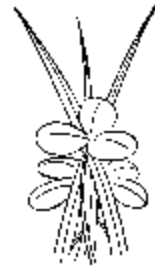
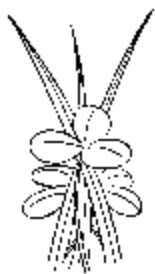
### Repository Citation

University of Kentucky Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, "Forage News [2001-12]" (2001). *Forage News*. 195.  
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# FORAGE NEWS



## In this month's issue:

! Nitrogen Credits for Alfalfa ! Kentucky's Top Hay Counties !  
Grazing Conference Big Success ! Understanding Forage Quality !  
Commissioner Smith to Keynote Alfalfa Conference ! Phase 1 Update

**December 2001**

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

## NITROGEN CREDITS FOR ALFALFA

How much nitrogen is available following an alfalfa crop? This question has been re-examined in the past few years in light of new research from the University of Wisconsin. Several factors influence amount of nitrogen available following alfalfa including soil type and how thick the alfalfa was when it was plowed-down or burned-down with herbicides. The following data was provided by Dr. Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin:

Alfalfa Nitrogen Credits		
	Med, Fine Soils	
	-- Regrowth after last cutting --	
	> 8 inches	< 8 inches
Stand Density	---- lb nitrogen/acre ----	
Good, > 4 pl/ft <sup>2</sup>	190	150
Fair, 1.5 to 4 pl/ft <sup>2</sup>	160	120
Poor, < 1.5 pl/ft <sup>2</sup>	130	90

Dan Undersander, Wisconsin

## KENTUCKY'S TOP HAY COUNTIES

Lee Brown, State Statistician and all the fine folks at the Kentucky Agricultural Statistical Service in Louisville do an excellent job providing a wealth of information on Kentucky Agriculture. I appreciate all the information they provide and their excellent publications.

Kentucky has approximately 90,000 farms and ranks 4<sup>th</sup> nationally. The average farm size is 151 acres. Kentucky ranks in the top 20 on almost every major crop and livestock

species. Kentucky ranks 7<sup>th</sup> in total hay production, 27<sup>th</sup> in alfalfa hay and #2 in all other hay. Top hay producing counties for 2000 were: Barren, Pulaski, Monroe, Warren, Breckinridge. The top five alfalfa hay producing counties were: Hart, Fleming, Barren, Shelby, and Hardin. The top cattle counties were: Barren, Warren, Pulaski, Madison, Allen and Lincoln. For more on Kentucky Agriculture, see: "Kentucky Agricultural Statistics 2000-2001." Visit them at their homepage on the web at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/ky/> or by calling 1-800-928-5277.

## GRAZING CONFERENCE BIG SUCCESS

Over 300 attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference held at the Fayette County Extension Office in Lexington on November 29. Participants heard leading speakers from Kentucky along with two outstanding speakers from other states. Mr. R. L. Dalrymple did an outstanding job discussing "Practical Tools & Strategies for Making Grazing Profitable" along with addressing a frequently asked question "Should I Chain Harrow my Pastures?" Dr. Gary Bates, Extension Forage Specialist from the University of Tennessee, discussed the question "Pasture Aeration: Will it Pay?" One of the highlights of the Conference was the presentation of the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council's Awards. This years' recipients were:

Steve Johnson - Producer  
Charlie McIntyre - Public--County  
Donna Amaral-Phillips - Public--State  
Sharon Burton - Industry

Congratulations to each of the award recipients.

## UNDERSTANDING FORAGE QUALITY

A new national publication is now available on "Understanding Forage Quality". This twenty page multi-colored state-of-the-art publication was written by nine



leading forage scientists from several universities and industry. In our opinion, this publication represents the most up-to-date, practical, easy to read information on Forage Quality. Complimentary copies will be available at the "Forages at KCA" on January 11 in Bowling Green and at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference on February 21 in Cave City.

## COMMISSIONER SMITH TO KEYNOTE ALFALFA CONFERENCE

Kentucky's Commissioner of Agriculture, Billy Ray Smith, will be the featured speaker at the 22<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference to be held at the Cave City Convention Center February 21, 2002. Commissioner Smith will discuss, "Marketing Kentucky Hay." In addition to Commissioner Smith, several other outstanding speakers including industry, producers, and university personnel will discuss important aspects of alfalfa management ranging from advances in breeding to advances in hay harvest equipment.

Registration for the conference will be the same as it has been for over ten years. The \$15 registration fee will include breaks, lunch, proceedings, and other educational materials. Again this year we will have a silent auction and a "full house" of exhibitors in the exhibit area. We will provide a detailed program in next month's Forage News. For more information on the conference, contact Garry Lacefield [glacefie@ca.uky.edu](mailto:glacefie@ca.uky.edu) phone 270-365-7541 X202; Jimmy Henning [jhenning@ca.uky.edu](mailto:jhenning@ca.uky.edu) phone 859-257-3144 or Christi Forsythe [cforsyth@ca.uky.edu](mailto:cforsyth@ca.uky.edu) phone 270-365-7541 X221.

## PHASE 1 UPDATE

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board has approved a model forage improvement and utilization cost-share program for local implementation utilizing county agricultural development funds. The program provides for up to \$5,000 in cost-share assistance, matched by the applicant on a 50/50 basis. The full details are available on the Ag Policy web site: [www.kyagpolicy.com](http://www.kyagpolicy.com). Click on the Ag Development Board title to get to the Phase 1 information.

The forage plan is a set of guidelines that will guide counties in their investment in forages. The plan contains support for alfalfa, clover and summer perennial grasses as well as funds for interior fencing, water systems and heavy use areas. The state forage plan is not perfect, and does not cover everything.

Unlike most other forage improvement programs, you must choose from a list of approved varieties for alfalfa, clover and the summer perennial grasses. This list is based on research data in University of Kentucky yield trials, from industry research and from experience. The rationale is that there is a strong tendency to purchase the cheapest seed possible, and research has shown this is a very poor decision. Variety decisions are made by the University of Kentucky.

The summer perennial grass section covers many native species as well as bermudagrass and caucasian bluestem. Be aware that these grasses have a slow establishment phase. Do your homework before investing. The rewards are

great for having a perennial summer phase to your grazing program. However, using these species is not a casual or last minute decision.

Fence and Water. We know from surveys and from experience that rotational grazing can be profitable for farmers, and that the most limiting factor in systems is access to water. The state Phase 1 plan provides funding for interior fencing and for water development. I could make a strong case for making this area the largest area of investment on your farm.

Heavy Use Area. The heavy use area section is designed to help to reduce mud in a rotational grazing system (gates, alleys), around a feeding area or as a base for storing bales. There was a lot of discussion about hay structures for the forage plan, but at the time we were not successful in getting that approved. Discussion of support for hay structures continues, and it is certainly still possible in subsequent actions by the Ag Development Board.

Even though this has been a slow and sometimes frustrating process, never has so much thought and discussion gone into a farm re-investment program, at least in my memory.

What will you have to do to be a part? First your county has to adopt the state forage plan (or part of it) as a part of your county plan. Second, you will need to fill out an application (available at the Kentucky Ag Policy Web Site), which is nothing more than information about your farm. You are going to have to have an aerial photo plus a drawing of the fields and fences plus water points. Finally, you will be asked for a forage plan, which is nothing more than stating what you are going to do, where you are doing it, and why. These improvements should be shown on the farm map. Good luck with your forage improvements. (*Jimmy Henning*)

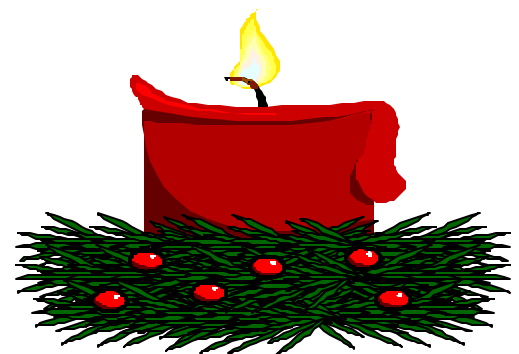
## COMMON RED CLOVER IS A NON- WINNER

The milk we buy recently had a contest with a peel-off label; ours mostly said that we were a non-winner. That got a big laugh several times at our house (it does not take much for me). I had not heard that 'polite' way of saying that we lost. Well I don't have to be polite when I speak of common medium red clover. For over 10 years, we have been putting over-the-counter, common red clovers into our yield trials and they very consistently are 'non-winners.' Recently, I rated the Princeton red clover plots for stand and the commons were only half stands at best. To top it off, there was a good bit of nutsedge encroachment, and ***it was only in the common medium red clover plots!*** And no, I did not plant the nutsedge at night when no one was looking. As a reminder, using a better red clover only costs a few more cents per pound (usually less than a dollar), and you get more yield (3 to 6 tons per acre over the life of the stand) and more persistence. But you did not hear me say that it controls nutsedge (I wanted to, but you did not hear me say that). Don't be a non-winner, buy improved red clover. Check out our UK variety reports for the latest in yield information. (*Jimmy Henning*)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

JAN 11 Forages at KCA, Bowling Green  
JAN 24 Five-State Grazing Conference, Rend Lake  
Community College, Illinois  
FEB 21 XXII Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City  
JUL 18 UK All Commodity Field Day, Princeton

Garry D. Lacefield Jimmy C. Henning  
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*Extension Forage Specialists*



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