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## Forage News [2001-04]

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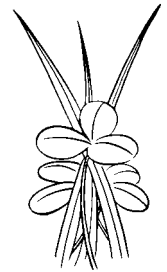
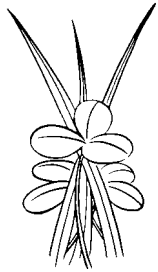
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# FORAGE NEWS



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**April 2001**

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

### *SIGN UP NOW FOR 2001 SPRING*

### *KENTUCKY GRAZING SCHOOL*

Sign up now for the 2001 Spring Kentucky Grazing School, to be held at the Washington County Extension Office in Springfield. The school is Tuesday April 17 to Thursday April 19 with a registration fee of \$100 per person. Pre-registration is necessary. This fee covers all meals, breaks, the Kentucky Grazing Manual, a copy of Southern Forages and the Forage Pocket Guide. The school starts with registration at 7:30 AM on Tuesday April 17 and finishes just after lunch on April 19<sup>th</sup>.

To register for the school, please send your check for \$100, payable to the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council, to Ken Johnson, PO Box 700, Tompkinsville, KY 42167. You may contact Ken at 270.487.6589 ext 3. Further information is available from Ken or from Jimmy Henning (859.257.3144, [jhenning@ca.uky.edu](mailto:jhenning@ca.uky.edu)) or Garry Lacefield (270.365.7541 ext 202, [glacefie@ca.uky.edu](mailto:glacefie@ca.uky.edu)).

Hotel rooms are being held at the Days Inn in Springfield at \$55 per night. Ask for the Kentucky Grazing School (859.336.7550).

This school features classroom and hands-on training and will enable you to set up a sound grazing system when you get back to the farm. Spaces are limited to the first 45 that sign up. Don't delay, call Ken today.

The Washington County Extension Office is at 211 Progress Street, which is one block north and ½ block east of the intersection of Ky 150 and Ky 555 (Phone 859.336.7741).

### *CLOVER SELECTION GUIDELINES*

Clover Selection Guidelines "Marketing Species Trait to the Situation" is the title of the Clover Commission's newest publication. This practical publication has information and pictures of many annual and perennial clovers. This publication is the fourth of its size and shape to be released by the Commission. If you would like copies of this publication, contact Christi at [cforsyth@ca.uky.edu](mailto:cforsyth@ca.uky.edu) or 270-365-7541, Ext. 221.

### *ALFALFA SEEDINGS UP IN 2000*

Kentucky farmers seeded 70,000 acres of alfalfa this past year. This marked a 20,000 increase over the previous year. (SOURCE: USDA NASS)

### *ROUNDUP READY ALFALFA - A PROGRESS REPORT*

RR alfalfa varieties are now being developed. The RR transgene has been backcrossed into a wide variety of germplasm sources. RR alfalfa varieties will be available with excellent adaptation to most major alfalfa production areas in the world (FD3 - FD9). Preliminary forage yield data suggests that the first RR alfalfa varieties will yield equal to or better than commercial check cultivars of the same fall dormancy. RR alfalfa cultivars will also have the excellent multiple pest resistance and high forage quality that characterize many of the newer commercial varieties.

All RR alfalfa varieties will have at least 90% trait purity. This means that ≥90% of the plants in a RR variety will show tolerance to Roundup™. The excellent herbicide tolerance of RR alfalfa varieties will show flexibility in application timing, making the technology a useful tool in both stand establishment and in the control of perennial weeds in established alfalfa. Product concept tests, to help identify best agronomic practices for optimizing use of the technology, will be carried out on a regional basis by agronomists and weed scientists at several major universities.

Commercial release of RR alfalfa is expected in 2004 or 2005. The date of release is primarily dependent on the duration of review prior to regulatory approval. Multiple location forage yield trials of RR Alfalfa experimentals will begin in last 2001. All Roundup Ready alfalfa varieties will meet the trait purity and product performance standards established by Monsanto. (SOURCE: Mark McCaslin, Sharie Fitzpatrick and Stephen Temple IN Proc. 29<sup>th</sup> National Alfalfa Symposium, Dec. 11-12, 2000)

### *DISTANCE CATTLE TRAVEL TO WATER AFFECTS PASTURE UTILIZATION*

## *RATE*

Location of watering facilities on grazing lands has been widely recognized as a factor controlling grazing distribution by ruminants. In rangeland environments, the typical recommendations are that animals travel no farther than 2 miles to water on flat topography and no more than 1 mile in rough country. In humid temperate environments, less attention has been paid to water location and its effects on grazing distribution. A study was conducted at the Forage Systems Research Center to determine the effect of distance traveled to water on pasture utilization rate by beef cow-calf pairs. Ten acre pastures with length width ratios of approximately 1 versus 4 were compared for uniformity of grazing distribution. The pastures more nearly square were grazed uniformly in all areas with a mean individual grazing period utilization rate of approximately 35% for a single grazing period. Rectangular pastures were more variable in grazing distribution with utilization rate ranging from between 40 and 50% at the front 100 to 200 ft of the pasture to less than 20% when distance from water exceeded approximately 1100 ft.

The final recommendation was that pasture systems be designed to provide water sources within 600 to 800 feet of all areas of the pasture for optimum uniformity of grazing. (SOURCE: J. Gerrish, Forage Systems Research Center, University of Missouri)

## *HYBRID ALFALFA PROMOTED IN POPULAR PRESS*

Recent popular press articles on Hybrid Alfalfa (Hybriforce-400) have raised a lot of questions about this new alfalfa. Here is a summary of what we know about this new product.

1. It is marketed by Dairyland, who has no known distributors of seed in Kentucky. The variety will be marketed as HybriForce-400.
2. Yield reports from farmer strip plots claim 8 to 15% yield increases over other alfalfa varieties. University trials using early generations of this variety have shown less yield increase. This difference is very likely due to the hybrid nature of the variety.
3. This variety is produced using a unique hybridization process, providing extra yield. This process has been compared to hybrid corn variety production.
4. HybriForce-400 only has an MR (Moderate) resistance rating to *Aphanomyces* Root Rot, which is slightly below the Kentucky minimum standard of 'R.' It is highly resistant to *Phytophthora* Root Rot (PRR).
5. Seed cost is very high, with undiscounted seed prices quoted at \$270 per bag (>\$5 per pound).
6. It has not been in any yield trials in Kentucky.
7. **Bottom line:** This variety looks like a real breakthrough in the way that alfalfa varieties are produced and could give a real boost to yield figures. However, it is vulnerable to *aphanomyces* and the seed price is very high. Kentucky performance is a complete unknown.

## *DISK VS. SICKLEBAR MOWERS*

This past year we received many questions concerning

disk vs. sicklebar mowers. The following data was supplied by Dr. Dan Undersander from the University of Wisconsin.

Alfalfa stand and yield after two years of mowing with either sicklebar or disk mowers at Arlington, WI.		
	Sicklebar Mower	Disk Mower
Yield (last two cuttings, t/a)	2.94	2.98
Stand (plants/sq. ft.)	6.2	6.2

## *CONTROLLED GRAZING*

The following was excerpted from an article by Mr. John Spain, a forage producer from Arkansas. The complete article appeared in the Spring issue of The Forage Leader, Vol. 6, No. 1.

**ADVANTAGES** - Listed below are a dozen advantages of controlled grazing on the cow-calf farm:

8. Better utilization of resources – keeps vegetation young, growing and palatable.
9. Increases stocking rate.
10. Increases weaning or growing rate.
11. Decreases mowing and the use of herbicides.
12. Decreases use of fertilizer.
13. Decreases incidence of grass tetany and rescue toxicity.
14. Decreases grain supplementation.
15. Decreases bull-to-cow ratio.
16. Increases reproductive efficiency.
17. Improves livestock control – moving, penning, and gentler at calving.
18. Improves erosion control – better year-round vegetative cover and no cow paths.
19. Improves cow condition – year-round with no retained placentas.

**MYTHS OR EXCUSES** - Myths or excuses that you will have to work out as you consider or begin to adapt to controlled grazing:

1. Individual cattle will not do as good.
2. Don't have the time.
3. Fescue and other cool-season grasses are not as receptive.
4. High cattle density or intensive grazing causes erosion.
5. Bermuda does not do well – causes too many weeds.
6. Can't fertilize grass with clover in it – because it will kill it.

## *UPCOMING EVENTS*

APR 17-19      Grazing School, Springfield

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Extension Forage Specialists

April 2001