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Forage News [1999-06]

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
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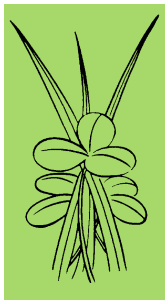
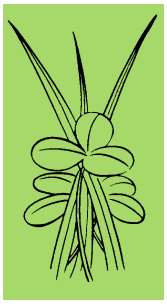
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

FORAGE NEWS





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June 1999

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

FORAGE/BEEF FIELD DAY - CRITTENDEN COUNTY - JUNE 15

The annual KFGC/KCA field day is set and ready to go. The host Triple W Farms is a good place to see a working forage/beef operation that is using current technology and developing their own innovations. Their story will be a big part of the field day.

In addition, two formal tours will be offered in the morning and repeated in afternoon. Participants can take both tours by arriving before 10:30 and staying until about 3 PM. Topics for the forage tour include filter fabric for high use areas, how to develop water systems, value of rotational grazing, making baled silage and renovating pastures with legumes. A beef tour will feature the use of ultrasound for reproduction management, adding value to beef, strategies for supplemental feeding, reducing production costs and how Triple W Farms use the FACTS program.

To get to the field day site, go to Mattoon on Hwy. 60 east of Marion, then south on 654 about a mile and left on Fishtrap Road about two miles. We look forward to a great field day and hope to see you there. *(Monroe Rasnake)*

FORAGE FIELD DAY STOPS SHOW THE BEST OF UK

There will be 4 forage stops featured at the UK Agronomy and Horticulture Field Day on Thursday July 15 at the Spindletop Research Farm north of Lexington off Ky 922 (Newtown Pike). The forage topics are: Kentucky born and bred forage grasses: Can we build one for you?; Making haylage when the sun doesn't shine; The next decade of red clover varieties; and Overgrazing new varieties of fescue, orchardgrass and alfalfa - Will they take it? Tours will run continuously from 8:15 AM to 2:30 PM. Lunch will be available from 11:15 AM until 1:00 PM at a nominal charge from the Kentucky Beef and Pork Producer Associations.

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY'S EDEN SHALE RESEARCH FARM

The Eden Shale Research Farm at Owenton, Kentucky came about when a group of farmers and agricultural workers in 1953 decided that there was a need for a research farm in the Eden Shale area of Kentucky doing research work on problems unique to that area.

The Eden Shale area of Kentucky consists of some or all of 32 counties that encircle the Bluegrass Region, with the majority of area being in Northern Kentucky. The area is characterized by steep slopes, narrow ridge tops, narrow valleys with a minimum amount of bottom land, and a shallow clay soil type.

In 1955, enough money had been raised from farmers and businesses in the Eden Shall Area to purchase and combine five farms into what is now Eden Shale Research Farm, which has 965 acres, and turned it over to the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture.

After buildings, houses, roads, fencing and water supplies were renovated or rebuilt; research and demonstrations were started in sheep production, beef production, dairy production, Christmas trees, orchards, U-pick strawberries, raspberries and vegetables, greenhouse tomatoes and tobacco.

For 19 years, 1975-94, the Kentucky Central Bull Test was located at Eden Shale and approximately 2000 bulls were performance tested.

Currently a 125-cow crossbred beef herd is maintained and used on grazing management studies grazing endophyte infected tall fescue. Their calves are backgrounded on farm raised feed and used on grazing experiments in the spring and either sold or fed out when they reach feedlot weight. Replacement females are selected and added to the breeding herd.

Variety trials are currently being conducted on alfalfa, orchardgrass, tall fescue, timothy, smooth brome grass, and burley tobacco. (*Joe Wyles, Farm Manager, Eden Shale Farm)*

TESTING HAY IS THE BEST DEAL IN TOWN

One phone call can change your entire hay feeding and marketing plan. A call to 1-800-248-4628 which will connect you with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Hay Testing Division, will arrange an appointment for them to come to your farm and take a sample of your hay for analysis. The cost is $10 per 'lot' or group of hay bales tested. A 'lot' of hay is a group of hay cut from the same field at the same time and stored and handled in a similar way.

Allen Johnson heads up this program and has initiated a new service in addition to supplying you with a forage analysis. If you desire, Allen will arrange to have either your County Ag Agent and/or himself come back to the farm and work out a balanced ration using your hay analysis to feed your cattle. Now that is a good deal for $10.

A lot of hay has been put up in May this year, and it looks like it went up in good shape and not overly mature. Let's take that next step and get it tested for nutrient analysis. It truly is the best deal going.

SPRING GRAZING SCHOOLS WENT WELL

The spring grazing schools reached over 100 and covered most of the eastern half of Kentucky. Participants came from 3 states and from several counties and received the latest on the theory, tools, and techniques of intensive grazing. These schools included the three day school in Owen County which was conducted at the Owen Co. Extension Office and the Eden Shale Farm. Thanks to Kim Strohmeier and Joe Wyles for helping this school be a great success. The one day (Mini-) schools were at Morehead, Springfield, and Richmond. Mini-school hosts included Lane Cowsert (MSU), Bob Marsh, Rick Greenwell, Mike Judge (EKU), and John Wilson.

Both one day and three day schools are planned for the fall. The three day school is scheduled for October 12-14 at Princeton and registration is $125 which covers all meals and materials. The fall one-day schools have not been set as to date and place.

FENCELESS GRAZING

Last month I had the pleasure of traveling with a team from the U.S. to China. We were invited to China to present a workshop on grasses and legumes. Workshop team members were Dr. Don Ball, Extension Agronomist, Auburn University and Dr. Tim DelCurto, Animal Scientist, Oregon State University. I will share some of our experiences during future newsletters and meetings. Listed below is an excerpt from one of Dr. DelCurto's presentations discussing some of his work on "fenceless grazing".

Research being conducted on Oregon State University's Hall Ranch involves the use of radio transmitters and receivers to control livestock movement and distribution. The concept of the transmitters and receivers is similar to a shock collar used for training dogs. The cattle wear a radio receiver eartag that is the size of a small transistor radio. In turn, a battery operated transmitter is placed in an area of desired livestock exclusion zone to the animals wearing the eartag receivers. When an animal wearing an ear tag receiver approaches the signal boundary from the transmitter (exclusion zone), the animal receives an audio signal and, if they do not return to the grazing zone, a maximum of four electronic signals. The signal from the transmitter and subsequent stimulus received by the eartag trains the animals to avoid exclusion areas.

Research to date has indicated that this technology has substantial potential in discouraging livestock use of riparian areas. In short, the electronic eartags have been shown to effectively change grazing patters. Research suggests that this technique does not adversely stress animals.

The future use of this technology is encouraging. Fenceless livestock control has significant advantages to exclusion fencing particularly related to other uses of public lands (ie. recreation and wildlife, esthetics, etc.). The advent of global positioning technology and its potential use in technology such as electronic diversion may open up even greater potential in the near future.

PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATIONS OF GRAZING HORSES ON ALFALFA

Sixteen yearling horses were grazed on alfalfa under two different grazing treatments. Eight horses were continually grazed on 5.2 acres and eight were grazed on a rotational system consisting of six paddocks of .9 acres each. The horses were allowed 24 hour access to alfalfa throughout the trial, and they received no additional protein or energy supplementation. The continually grazed treatment lasted 25 days before the grazing pressure removed available forage. Those horses on the rotation treatment grazed a total of 37 days. Forage yields revealed that the horses on rotation had access to more forage per acre due to yield variations in the field and to the systems design of restricting grazing to smaller sections of the grazing area. Visual observation revealed a higher incidence of spot grazing in the continually grazed treatment. Animal gains at 25 days of grazing averaged .5 pounds per day for the continually grazed horses and 1.3 pounds per day for the rotationally grazed horses. No digestive disorders were detected in any of the horses. Results suggest that if managed correctly, moderate growth rate may be reached in yearling horses grazing alfalfa without additional supplementation. From visual observation, it is suggested that a controlled grazing system may be the most efficient method for forage utilization under the conditions of this trial. *(SOURCE: D.W. Freeman, D.R. Topliff, F.T. McCollum, J.E. Pumphrey, W. Altom and C.A. Griffith, Noble Foundation, IN: 1987 Animal Science Research Report 127)*

UPCOMING EVENTS

JUNE 15	KFGC/KCA Field Day, Crittenden Co.
JULY 15	Agronomy Field Day, Spindletop Farm, Lexington
JULY 22	All Commodity Field Day, UK Robinson Experiment Station, Quicksand
OCT 12-14	KY Grazing School, U.K. Research & Education Center, Princeton

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