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## Forage News [1998-12]

University of Kentucky Department of Plant and Soil Sciences

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## FORAGE NEWS

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

### **Kentucky Hosts AFGC Board**

The board of directors of the American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC) met in Lexington on November 20 and 21 for their regular fall board meeting. AFGC is the parent organization of the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council. Jimmy Henning and Larry Jeffries are currently serving on the Executive Committee of AFGC with Jimmy as current President and Larry as President-elect. The meeting culminated with a tour of Creech, Inc. and Claiborne Farm. One of the major items of discussion was the upcoming annual meeting in Omaha.

### **Forages at KCA**

Again in 1999 we will kick off the Kentucky Cattlemen's Convention with a Forage Program. The committee has chosen "Getting More Value From Forage Legumes" as the theme. The program will begin at 9:30 on January 8 at the Executive Inn West in Louisville. Topics will include: Role and Importance of Forage Legumes in Kentucky Pasture & Hay Fields; Establishing Legumes for Pastures and/or Hay; Bloat: What is it? What Causes it? How Do I Reduce the Risk; and, Getting the Most Out of Your Legume-based Pastures.

### **Hay Testing is Best Bargain**

To get a hay test in Kentucky, all you have to do is call the Hay and Grain Division of the Kentucky Department of Agriculture at 800-248-4628 and set it up. You don't even have to leave your farm! They will come to you. And the cost is only \$10 per lot of hay tested.

We believe this is one of the best bargains going. For your \$10 per lot of hay sampled, a representative from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture will come to your farm, take a forage sample or samples, and get them analyzed for protein and energy. These results will be on the way back to you in approximately 5 days. In addition, the Department of Agriculture representatives will offer to balance a simple ration for you for the livestock that might consume the hay. This extra service was developed in conjunction with UK. The ration information will be made available back to you either directly from the Department of Agriculture or from your local county extension agent.

Don't forget that testing your hay for quality through the Department of Agriculture is also a way to get your hay listed for sale. If you indicate that you wish to sell the hay, then

visual and other characteristics of your hay will be noted and listed on the hay test sheet. This information will be compiled and held by the Department of Agriculture and made available to anyone calling in looking for hay. This system is the best of any in the country and Allen Johnson and the Department of Agriculture is committed to making this a quality service for Kentucky Farmers. *All you need to do is make the call.*

### **Historic Meeting is Approaching**

The first ever joint meeting of the American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC) and the Society for Range Management (SRM) is coming up in Omaha, Nebraska on February 21-26. This meeting marks the first time that these organizations have met in a joint annual meeting on a national scale. The program will feature the regular features of the AFGC annual meeting such as the Forage Spokesperson Contest, the Photo Contest, the Hay Show, and excellent papers and posters on current forage research. In addition, there will be a special day (Monday, February 22) devoted to the interests of farmers with a symposium on Management Intensive Grazing in the morning and Cash Hay Production in the afternoon. For more information about registration for this meeting, please contact Jimmy Henning (606 257 3144, [jhenning@ca.uky.edu](mailto:jhenning@ca.uky.edu)) or Garry Lacefield or Monroe Rasnake (both at 502 365 7541). Registrations must be post-marked by January 16 to avoid a late penalty.

### **Monthly Alfalfa Hay Quality Awards to be Announced at Cave City**

The monthly hay quality awards for the best alfalfa and alfalfa-grass hay tested by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture will be resumed this year at the upcoming Kentucky Alfalfa Conference at Cave City on March 4. The testing records from the Kentucky Department of Agriculture's hay quality analysis program will be used to select the best alfalfa and alfalfa-grass hay sampled based on the total score of the crude protein and relative feed value. A grand champion alfalfa and alfalfa-grass award will also be selected from the group of monthly winners. After an individual has won a monthly contest, they are not eligible to win from hay samples tested in another month. This program is designed to recognize and reward quality hay production in Kentucky.

## Hard Seed in Alfalfa

Questions arise about hard seed in alfalfa are becoming more important with increased seed production in the northwestern United States where seed tends to have higher levels of hard seed. To answer questions about hard seed, studies were initiated at three sites (Arlington, WI; West Salem, WI; and Napier, IA) in 1992 and 1993 to gain information on the effect of hard seed on speed of germination and on yield during seeding year. Each year four varieties with three levels of hard seed were planted at the three sites.

In study one at each site, 100 seeds were planted in a ring in the ground and germinated alfalfa seedlings were counted monthly and then removed. Most of the seed germinate within the first month after seeding with very little germination later months, regardless of hard seed level. This also tells us that, when farmers ask about hard seed filling in a thin alfalfa stand, the answer is that it will not because very few seeds germinate after the first month.

The most important question is: did hard seed levels affect alfalfa yield? In this study all plots were seeded at 12 lbs seed/a regardless of the level of hard seed. As shown in the table below, hard seed had no effect on yield in either the seeding year or the year after.

Effect of Hard Seed on Alfalfa Yields			
	1992 Seeding		1993 Seeding
Hard Seed Level	1992 Harvest	1993 Harvest	1993 Harvest
	tons/acre		
High	1.85	4.72	2.04
Medium	1.85	4.74	2.03
Low	1.88	4.78	2.05

(SOURCE: Dan Undersander, Ken Albrecht, Nick Degenhart, Jim Moutrey, Marc McCaslin, Univ. of Wisconsin Home Page)

## Forage Dependability

The following was taken from the introduction of Dr. Carl Hoveland's November Georgia Cattleman article.

Dependability is an important factor in forage production. Many years ago, Dr. Glenn Burton asked me what I thought was the most important characteristic of a desirable forage grass or legume for a cattle producer. Knowing of his great successes in breeding higher yielding and higher quality grasses, I answered, "Better yield and nutritive quality." "No, Carl," he replied, "The most important thing to the average cattle producer is the dependability of a forage plant year after year." Over the years as I have observed new forage varieties that have come and gone, the wisdom of Dr. Burton's words have continued to impress me. Cattle producers are often willing to accept less yield and lower nutritive quality as long as that forage plant is dependable when subjected to drought, heat, cold, or flooding along with periods of low fertility or overgrazing.

## 19<sup>th</sup> Alfalfa Conference - March 4, 1999

The 19<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference will be held at the Cave City Convention Center on March 4, 1999. The program committee has put together a very practical-important-interesting day of presentations devoted to alfalfa. The day's activities include:

- 8:00 Registration & Visit Exhibits
- 8:50 Welcome & Announcements
- 9:00 Which Grasses Work Best With Alfalfa? - *Dr. Tim Phillips*
- 9:20 "Secrets" to Getting a Good Stand of Alfalfa - *Dr. Jimmy Henning*
- 9:40 Alfalfa Following Alfalfa: What Works & What Doesn't Work - *Dr. Monroe Rasnake*
- 10:00 Break
- 10:20 Practical & Economical Ways to Increase Alfalfa Hay Drying Rates - *Dr. Mike Collins*
- 11:00 What We Have Learned From Four Years of Alfalfa Grazing Tolerant Variety Trials - *Dr. Jimmy Henning*
- 11:30 Grazing Alfalfa: Hope-Hype-Hysteria -*Dr. Garry Lacefield*
- 12:00 Lunch & Visit Exhibits
- 1:00 How I Produce & Market Alfalfa Hay - *Mr. John Nowak*
- 1:30 Marketing Alfalfa Hay: What the Consumer Demands - *Mr. Tom Keene*
- 2:00 Keys to Success in Marketing Alfalfa Hay in Kentucky - *Commissioner Billy Ray Smith*
- 2:30 Discussion & Adjourn

## UPCOMING EVENTS

DEC 10 Kentucky Farm Bureau Forage Commodity Conference, Louisville

### 1999

JAN 8-9 Kentucky Cattlemen's Convention, Louisville

FEB 21-26 AFGC/SRM Conference, Omaha, NE

MAR 4 19<sup>th</sup> KY Alfalfa Conference, Cave City

APR 28-30 Kentucky Grazing School, Eden Shale



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Extension Forage Specialists Forage News, December 1998