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Forage News [1998-05]

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

NOTES FROM THE KENTUCKY GRAZING SCHOOL

Spring brings challenges to pasture systems across Kentucky. After waiting and waiting for the spring flush of grass growth, when it gets here you wonder what you are going to do with it. The Kentucky Grazing School, which has just been completed for the spring, addressed the tools, techniques, tips, and principles needed to put your pasture system under your control. Forty participants at this bi-annual event estimated pasture availability, set stocking rates, learned what different levels of utilization look like, worked with various types of temporary fence and posts, and temporary water sources. Classroom and field sessions were mixed to give participants things they can put to work when they get home.

If you want to put a grazing system together for your farm, or want to improve the one you have, maybe you should put October 13-15 on your calendar. That is when the next Kentucky Grazing School will be conducted at the UK Research and Education Center in Princeton. For more information, you can contact Jimmy Henning at 606 257 3144 or jhenning@ca.uky.edu.

BETH PREWITT WINS AWARD AT NATIONAL FORAGE MEETING

Beth Prewitt won the Emerging Scientist Paper Competition at the 1998 annual meeting of the American Forage and Grassland Council held recently in Indianapolis, Indiana. Beth's presentation on 'The effect of overseeded legume species and sod disturbance on the subsequent yield and quality of a tall fescue sod' was selected best by a panel of judges. Beth is currently finishing her Master's Degree in Agronomy under Dr. Tummy Henning. Beth is also the Director of Student Relations for the College of Agriculture. Congratulations Beth!

BALAGE IS A GOOD HARVEST OPTION

Silage can be made from round bales of forage that are made at about 50% moisture and wrapped in 4 layers of stretch wrap plastic by one of the new bale wrappers. This feed is excellent and is a good way to minimize damage to forage crops from weather. A new publication on making round bale silage is in the final stages before publishing at the University of Kentucky. If you would like more information on this topic or any other, please feel free to contact Jimmy Henning (jhenning@ca.uky.edu) or Garry Lacefield (glacefie@ca.uky.edu) or your county extension agent.

EFFECT OF NITROGEN ON LEGUMES IN PASTURES

We often hear that applying nitrogen fertilizer on grass/legume pastures will cause a decrease in the percentage of legume in the mix. I just returned from a meeting in Louisiana where I picked up a publication that has some data that illustrates the magnitude of this effect. The research was actually conducted in Alabama, but is reported in Louisiana Extension publication 2674 "Pasture Fertilization in Louisiana".

Effect of Nitrogen Rate on Cover in a Grass/ Clover Pasture		
N Rate (lbs/A)	Percent clover	
	April 29	May 29
0	30	29
60	17	10
120	1	6

While conditions in Kentucky are different from those in Alabama and Louisiana, I believe we could expect a similar effect of fertilizer nitrogen on clovers in our pastures. (*Monroe Rasnake*)

**STATEWIDE BEEF-FORAGE
FIELD DAY PLANNED**

A joint field day of the Ky Cattleman's Association and the Ky Forage and Grassland Council will be held on the Greg Ritter Farm in Barren County on Thursday June 18 beginning at 4PM. The program plans stops on rotational grazing, renovation, beef alliances and marketing and many other items. There will be commercial exhibitors. A complimentary meal will be served. More information will follow as it is available.

HARVEST DECISIONS AFFECT QUALITY

The first harvest of the year is also the most important. The stage of maturity at harvest determines the maximum quality for the cutting. The date of first cutting also greatly affects how many harvests you will get for the year. The best time to harvest forage crops

is a compromise between quality (early cutting) and yield (later cutting). Other minor things like weather and planting can also enter your mind. The optimum stages of maturity for harvest of forage crops are listed below.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- JUN 18 KCA/KFGC Field Day, Barren County
- JUL 16 U.K. College of Agriculture All Commodity Field Day, UKREC, Princeton, KY
- OCT 13-15 Kentucky Gruing School, UKREC, Princeton, KY

Garry D. Lacefield
Garry D. Lacefield
Extension Forage Specialist

Recommended Stages to Harvest Various Forage Crops

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

¹ Boot 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.