



7-2018

Forage News [2018-07]

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 [2018-07]" (2018). *Forage News*. 249.
https://uknowledge.uky.edu/forage_news/249

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Forage News

Keeping Forage-Livestock producers in Kentucky informed
Dr. S. Ray Smith and Krista Lea, MS.~ Editors

July 2018

Attend the Western KY KFGC Field Day, August 7th

In 2018 KFGC will host two summer field days. The Western KY field day is August 7 from 2:30 to 6:30 in Ballard County. The Eastern KY field day is at the Morehead State University farm September 6 from 4:30 to 8:00. More details on the eastern field day in the August issue of Forage News.

"This year's Western KY field day features an innovative grazing operation that has implemented rotational stocking, uses novel forages for both summer and winter months and has selected animals that perform well in their all forage environment," said Chris Teutsch, UK extension forage specialist. "This will be one of the best field days in 2018."

During the western KY event, participants will tour the farm, which is owned and operated by Toby and Debby Dulworth. The Dulworths run about 300 head of Hereford cattle. Over the years, they have implemented innovative grazing techniques, so the herd is raised entirely on pasture. The Dulworths have direct marketed their local, grass-finished beef since 2003, and it is now the farm's major enterprise.

Event participants will visit a farm-scale demonstration that features 12 warm-season annual grasses and mixtures, see how improved crabgrass varieties work on Dogwood Farm, tour a 30-year-old eastern gamagrass stand, learn about fencing and watering improvements, and hear how the farm finishes and markets beef on an all-forage diet.

Pre-registration for the western field day is required. Participants can register online at <https://westernkyforageday.eventbrite.com> or contact Christi Forsythe at 270-365-7541, ext. 221. The cost to attend is \$10 payable on the day of the event. The full schedule and a flyer is available on the UK Forage Website. Address: DOGWOOD FARM, 2492 South Kirkman Rd, LaCenter, KY 42056

Register today for KY Grazing School-Sept. 25-26

The Fall Kentucky Grazing School will be held at the Woodford County Extension Office and the C. Oran Little Research Center in Versailles, KY on September 25-26, 2018. The highlight of the Grazing School is always the hands-on components including: setting up temporary fence and water systems, determining stocking rate, measuring forage, forage ID and more... Registration is only \$50 and includes educational materials, transportation to and from the research farm and lunches. Space is limited; see full details and register online at the Forage Website forages.ca.uky.edu/event.

Forage Timely Tips: July

- ✓ Start weed control for summer weeds like tall ironweed and horse nettle.
- ✓ Identify fescue pastures for stockpiling.
- ✓ Soil test fields to be seeded in fall to determine pasture fertilization needs.

Chiggers

Chiggers have little to do with forage, but the following article is interesting about these tiny nuisances. They are the immature stage of certain mites that live in overgrown brushy or grassy areas, especially where small rodents are abundant. People pick up chiggers while in shady, humid areas near stream banks, under or around trees, or in berry thickets. Chiggers are more active in early summer but can persist much later.

Once on board, chiggers attach and feed where the skin is thin, tender, or wrinkled, or where clothing is tight. Their digestive enzymes liquefy skin cells causing small red welts and intense itching that begins a few hours after chiggers have fed. Chiggers do not burrow into the skin or feed on blood. If undisturbed, these mites may remain attached and feed for 3 or 4 days. Read about personal protection, reducing discomfort from bites and controlling chiggers outdoors online at <https://KentuckyPestNews.wordpress.com> ~ Lee Townsend and Mike Potter, UK Entomology Dept.

Managing Windrow Disease in Alfalfa

Rained-on hay plagues all of us eventually. This year maybe more than usual. The 'windrow disease' that often follows presents lingering problems.

Windrow disease — that's the name I give to the striped appearance in fields where alfalfa windrows remained so long that regrowth was delayed. Usually it's due to rained on hay and sometimes, insects.

Windrow disease presents special challenges. Weeds often invade, requiring spraying to maintain quality and protect stands. During the next growth period, plants that were not smothered regrow rapidly, while plants underneath the windrow suffer delays. Part of the field often will begin to bloom while windrow-stressed plants are still short and tender. So when do you harvest? When the first plants begin to bloom or do you wait until injured plants are ready?

I suggest using two factors to tell you when you should cut — the health and vigor of your stand and the nutrient

needs of your livestock. For example, is your alfalfa stand young, healthy and regrowing well? If it's not, then wait to cut until stunted plants begin to bloom so you can avoid weakening them even more.

But, if your alfalfa is in good shape, then cut when it will best meet the needs of your animals. Dairy cows need alfalfa that is cut early, so harvest when the first plants reach bud to early bloom stage. Regrowth of injured plants may be slow after cutting, but this sacrifice is needed for profitable milk production. Beef cows, though, do not need such rich hay. So if the hay will be fed to beef cattle, let stunted plants recover, and then cut when they are ready to bloom. Hopefully, by next cut, growth will be more uniform, plants healthy, and production back to normal. ~ Bruce Anderson, Hay and Forage Minute, Univ. of Nebraska

Forage Following Wheat

Once your wheat is gone or you have a fallow field, how do you plan to use that ground? With good moisture and lots of growing season left this year there are many forage possibilities. For example, with good moisture an early maturing corn is one possibility for silage if you plant it thick. A better silage choice if conditions are dry might be a high grain producing forage sorghum if chinch bugs and other insects are not a problem.

If hay is preferred, plant sudangrass, pearl millet, or foxtail millet (only one cut). Sudangrass is probably the best choice for yield and regrowth. Hay crops exceeding 2-4 tons per acre are possible when planted in early July. Another hay or silage alternative is solid-seeded soybeans. Two-three tons of good forage can be grown from taller, full season varieties planted after wheat. Oats planted in early August is another option. Yields over two tons are common with good moisture and high fertility.

~ Bruce Anderson, Hay and Forage Minute, Univ. NE

Featured Publications: A Comprehensive Guide to Soybean Management in Kentucky (ID-249)

Soybean is used to produce hundreds of consumer, industrial, and feedstock products. Some of the most recognized products include vegetable oil, soymilk, animal feed products, and biodiesel. Other products made from soybean, which may be less well known, include spray foam insulation, plastics, paint, ink, wax, and wood adhesive. Soybean is an important crop to Kentucky's rotation. Among the four most common crops in Kentucky, it has remained the second most valuable crop for Kentucky for almost 20 years. For a copy of the full guide, contact your local county extension office or visit forages.ca.uky.edu.

Baleage Basics

Baleage is making silage in bales of wilted forage and wrapped in plastic. Conserving some of your forage this year as baleage can help stretch your hay supply and save on supplement costs.

Making baleage is a fairly simple process. It requires rakes and balers that can handle a heavy crop as well as access to a hay wrapper. A conditioning mower is less necessary with baleage than hay because stems are not completely dry with baleage.

Inline wrappers are the most common type of baleage implement. These machines are able to handle more tons per hour and use

see blue.

less plastic than the individual bale wrappers. To make baleage remember the following points: It is an anaerobic process. In order for the forage to ensile, the bale needs to be as dense as possible and wrapped with at least 4 layers of plastic and preferably 6. Use high quality plastic that is treated to resist degradation from UV radiation. Be sure to patch any holes in the plastic with the special tape that comes with the rolls of plastic. Use more plastic at the junctions between bales of different sizes because this region is stressed and prone to separate and let air in.

The process requires soluble carbohydrates. Cut forage at or before first flower (for legumes) or boot to early head (for grasses) so quality will be high. During ensiling, the soluble carbohydrates in the forage are converted to acetic, propionic and lactic acid, dropping the pH of the bale and making it stable in storage. These volatile fatty acids give silage its distinctive smell and the low pH prevents the formation of molds.

Bale when moisture content is between 45 and 65%. Moisture is crucial to good baleage. Fresh forage is around 80% moisture, and can be higher in the spring. Cut forage needs to wilt about a day before baling.

Wrap fast. Only cut down as much forage as can be baled and wrapped in one day. Even delaying 24 hours causes noticeable heating in the bales, lowering available carbohydrates for ensiling as well as the quality of the ensiled product.

Low pH stabilizes baleage. Ideally, the bales should ensile for 30 days before feeding. Feeding sooner than 30 days after wrapping will not harm livestock but the bunk life of this forage will be reduced. For more information on making baleage, see 'Baleage: Frequently Asked Questions' at the UK Forage Website. ~ Jimmy Henning, Farmer's Pride, May 2018

Quote of the Month: Chance Favors the Prepared Mind

Many great discoveries have been made by chance, but a requirement was that someone recognized the potential in the chance occurrence. The more knowledgeable a person is about soils, plants, animals, the environment and a given ecosystem, the greater the likelihood of recognizing chance occurrences as opportunities to improve the grazing system and overall results. Nature is always communicating with us, and if we are prepared to listen and interpret what we hear and see, we can learn. To purchase a Livestock Quotes and Concepts Book, contact us at ukforageextension@uky.edu.

Upcoming Events (see website for details and online registration)

AUG 6 - Equine Field Day, Harrodsburg, KY
AUG 7 -KFGC W. KY Field Day, LaCenter, KY
SEPT 6 - KFGC E. KY Field Day, Morehead State Univ.
SEPT 25-26 - KY Grazing School, Versailles, KY
OCT 30 - KY Grazing Conf. West, Hopkinsville, KY
NOV 1 -KY Grazing Conf. East, Winchester, KY
JAN 6-8 -AFGC Conference, St. Louis, MO
JAN 22-23—Heart of America Grazing Conf., Indiana
FEB 21 -KY Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conf., Lexington

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