Forage News [2019-11]

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Climate Change: Are Livestock a Problem
Talk of climate change from greenhouse gases (GHGs) has sparked the idea that livestock are a leading culprit for contributing to increased emissions and thus Americans should completely eliminate meat from their diets. Research supports the statement that animal agriculture does play a role in the level of GHGs. However, credit has not been given where credit is due. Drs. Robin R. White and Mary Beth Hall from Virginia Tech and the USDA analyzed the impact of eliminating animal agriculture from the US. They determined while eliminating animal agriculture would decrease GHGs from agriculture by 28%, the US would simply not be able to support the necessary nutritional requirements on plants alone. While a plant-based diet may contribute to a decrease in risks of heart disease and obesity, it is deficient of essential micronutrients, such as vitamins D, E, and K, and choline, which we derive from animal-based products. Some say eliminating animal-agriculture would free up food and land resources we could use to produce viable food for ourselves? Not exactly. Livestock graze land not suitable for crop production, and they also have a unique ability to convert human-inedible food and fiber byproducts into human-edible food, pet food, and other products such as fertilizer, germicides, textiles, heart valves and more. There is also the idea that a plant based diet would be very colorful and full of fruits and vegetables. Based on a simulation if we ate no animal products or imports, diets would consist of only 7% vegetables, 6% fruit, 9% other products, and a whopping 78% grains. This is large in part to the limited availability of soils and climates for crop production in the US. We rely on animals to convert micronutrient poor crops, such as grains, into nutrient dense meats, milk, and eggs. So the next time you take a bite of a hamburger or scramble up some eggs for breakfast, remember that the elimination of animal agriculture from the US would have minimal effect on GHG emissions but would have a significant impact on other industries we rely on and create nutrient deficiencies in American diets. – Sydney Beidleman, Summarized from Nutritional and greenhouse gas impacts of removing animals from US agriculture by Robin R. White and Mary Beth Hall

Kentucky Alfalfa Conference
Join us on February 20th in Elizabethtown for the 39th annual Kentucky Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference. Topics include: Don’t let insects eat your alfalfa profit, fertilizing profitable high yield alfalfa, getting the upper hand on diseases of alfalfa and grasses and advances in hay mechanization. Full program and registration link will be posted on the UK Forage Extension page, forages.ca.uky.edu/events soon.

Get the Most from Grazing Cornstalks
Corn harvest is ongoing in many parts of the country and cows are starting to graze the stalks. How should this grazing be managed to get the most out of them?
One of the most important decisions in all grazing situations is stocking rate, including corn stalks. Fortunately, you can get a good estimate for corn stalks by dividing the corn grain yield by 3.5 to estimate grazing days per acre for a 1,200-pound cow.

Forage Timely Tips: November
✓ Apply 30-40 lb N/A to strengthen cool-season grass sods through increasing tillering and root growth
✓ If not already done, inventory hay and assess hay quality.
✓ Adjust animal numbers or purchase additional hay to balance forage-feed supply to livestock needs.
✓ Graze winter annuals that will not overwinter such as turnips and oats.
✓ Graze other winter annuals once they are 6-8 inches tall and are well anchored. Do NOT graze closer to 4 inches.
✓ Sugar content will rise in tall fescue with the cool temperatures and short days of fall. Alkaloid content of tall fescue can be high in some years, but will decline after a hard freeze.
✓ Talk with local conservationist about developing a grazing plan and cost-share opportunities.
So, for a field that yielded 210 bushels per acre, dividing 210 by 3.5 gives 60 grazing days per acre. Thus, a 160-acre field could provide 9,600 cow grazing days.

One possibility is to graze 60 cows for 160 days. Starting here at the end of October, that could take you all the way through March. Sounds pretty good but how will this work nutritionally? Cows will eat the best feed first, any downed grain and the husks. After a couple months, all that will be left are stalks and leaves that have been walked over, rained or snowed upon. Without a lot of supplements, these cows will be in very poor shape by the end of March.

Clearly, shorter grazing periods are needed. Maybe, instead of 60 cows for 160 days you graze 160 cows for 60 days. Better, but you still may need supplements near the end of the 60 days. Better still would be to give those 160 cows just one week’s worth of the stalks to start, a little over 18 acres. By day 6 and 7 those 160 cows will have cleaned up just about everything, but on day 8 you give them a fresh 18 acres, returning them to high quality feed without so much supplement.

Both stocking rate and changes in the quality of grazing with time need consideration as you plan and manage stalk grazing. Do it right and corn stalks become a great winter feed resource. ~ Bruce Anderson, MyCentralNebraska.com

**USDA Hay Markets - October 22, 2019**

Below are examples of grass prices being paid FOB barn/stack (except for those noted as delivered, which is indicated by a “d” in the table below) for selected states at the end of the day on Friday, October 18. Large ranges for a particular grade and state are often indicative of location and/or bale size. Also check the USDA Hay Market Prices for additional locations and more detailed information. ~ e-Hay Weekly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Premium</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>90-300</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>160</td>
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<tr>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>165-168</td>
<td>115-220</td>
<td>80-120</td>
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<td>80-150</td>
<td>75-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>85-100</td>
<td>75-100</td>
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<td>Wyoming</td>
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</table>

Hay Prices as of October 18, 2019. Sign up for e-HayWeekly to receive these updates and a range of articles in your email every week.

**Publication of the Month: Using Dry Lots to Conserve Pastures (ID-171)**

Here are some of the major benefits of using a dry lot:
- Maintain forage and reduce mud on a larger pasture scale
- Prevent erosion around fences, gates, and waterers
- Reduce the need for vegetation maintenance
- Function as central locations for watering and supplemental feeding for several pastures
- Provide shade
- Reduce the need to renovate pastures

Find this and other forage publications on the UK Forage website and click “Publications”.

**Upcoming Events**
(see website for details and online registration)
- NOV 1 - Pasture Walk with Jim Gerrish, LaCenter, KY
- JAN 5-8- AFGC Annual Conference, Greenville, SC
- FEB 22 - Alfalfa Conf., Elizabethtown, KY
- MAR 19 - Novel Tall Fescue Workshop. Lexington, KY.

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www.forages.ca.uky.edu

Bonus content on page 3: Kids these Days...
Kids these Days...

I shudder every time I hear the phrase “kids these days…” This sentence often includes words like entitled, sheltered, or lazy. I’m not here to argue with you, (but contact me and I gladly will). Instead, I’m here to tell you what AFGC is doing about it and how you can get involved.

If you were at the 2019 AFGC conference in St. Louis, you were likely approached by a group of students asking you to take a picture with them, possibly doing something strange like playing leap frog in the hotel lobby. I hope you took the picture and I know many of you did. These students were there to compete in The National Forage Bowl Competition; this contest is one way AFGC is investing in the future of agriculture by investing in the next generation. On the surface, this competition is between teams from colleges and universities from across the eastern US. Sure, it’s fun to watch them duke it out for the top prize, but that’s not why we do it. Our mission is to get young people interested in forage agriculture and expose them to the professional opportunities that await them after graduation. Of the 28 undergraduates from 6 schools that participated in 2019, I can’t say all of them will end of being extension agents, specialists, or industry reps.

What I can say is that these students were exposed to these possible careers and many of them likely never considered these types of positions before. Some of these students may go on to be top forage producers, growing the food and fiber for the next generation. A few will likely try their hand at graduate school after meeting a inspiring professor whom offered them a position after the meeting. Even those that don’t stay in agriculture at all will have a better understanding of the industry and a better appreciation for those that till (or no-till) the land, to produce the resources we all need. As a young woman who didn’t grow up on a farm and fell into agriculture by accident, I can tell you events like this change the trajectory of lives. I’ve seen it and lived it. My hope is that students who participate in the AFGC National Forage Bowl Competition are still “Kids these days…” Kids that work hard, that care about protecting our resources, that strive to understand the science and not the perception and that choose a path for their lives as rewarding and blessed as so many of us in the forage world are fortunate enough to enjoy today.

The AFGC National Forage Bowl Competition (and the goose chase we send them on) is a labor of love for me and the others I have persuaded to help me. If you attend the AFGC conference in January, cheer for the students and talk to them at the conference. And most of all, take the picture with them! ~ Krista Lea, National Forage Bowl Chair, from AFGC Forage Feed

At the 2019 competition, students competed in a scavenger hunt aimed to help them network and interact at the conference. Here, the team from Wisconsin River Falls took a selfie with Forage Fanatic Henrietta Baylor.