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Forage News

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Forage News

Keeping Forage-Livestock Producers in Kentucky Informed

Dr. Ray Smith and Krista Lea, editors

December 2019

Higher than Avg. Summer Temperatures Last 2 Years

Carefully evaluate your forage management and species choices. Warm season grasses for summer production should be considered.

In 2018 in Lexington, growing season temperatures were above the 30 year average for every month from May to October. In 2019, growing season temperatures were above the 30 year average for every month from April to October. Tall Fescue is the best adapted cool season grass for Kentucky, proven from 20 years of forage variety trials. New novel tall fescue varieties are now commercially available and do quite well. Learn more about novel tall fescues at the Novel Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop in Lexington on March 19th 2020. Find more details on our website, forages.ca.uky.edu/events.

Degrees above 30 yr average for Lexington.

Month	2018	2019
May	+9°	+5°
June	+4°	+1°
July	+1°	+3°
August	+2°	+2°
September	+6°	+9°
October	+2°	+4°

Kentucky Alfalfa and Stored Forages Conference In Elizabethtown, February 20, 2020

The new Hardin county Extension Office will be hosting the 39th Kentucky Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference. Topics include:

- Managing Alfalfa Nutrient Uptake
 - Don't Let Insects Eat Your Alfalfa Profit
 - Fertilizing Profitable High Yield Alfalfa
 - Getting the Upper Hand on Diseases of Alfalfa and Grasses
 - Updates on an Online Alfalfa Management Tool Under Development
 - What's New in Alfalfa Weed Control
 - Advances in Hay Mechanization
 - Making a Profit with a cash hay Alfalfa Operation
- Early registration is just \$30. Find the full agenda or register at forages.ca.uky.edu/events.

Baled Cornstalks Offer Another Feed Option

As winter approaches, some producers are questioning if their hay inventories will last until spring. Cornstalks can extend hay inventories, but their use comes with some important considerations, according to Jeff Lehmkuhler, University of Kentucky extension beef specialist.

The best forage quality from the corn crop residues is in the leaves and husks, he says. The cobs and stalks are lower in digestibility with protein concentration ranging from only 3 to 6 percent, which is too low to meet the needs of cattle. The highest quality forage portions of corn crop residues are the leaves and husks.

The best way to utilize corn crop residues for feed is having the bales processed or by flail chopping the residue in the field to improve drying. Processed bales can be fed in a total mixed ration or along a feedbunk.

The extension specialist recommends feeding baled corn residues to dry, mid-gestation cows, remembering to supplement nutrients to meet diet requirements. Cattle fed cornstalks should be in good body condition and not be experiencing any environmental stresses, such as cold and mud. Environmental stresses on cattle will require additional supplementation.

Lehmkuhler offers an example diet for a mid-gestation cow of 15 pounds of cornstalks, 1.5 gallons of condensed distillers solubles (distillers syrup), and 2 pounds of soybean hulls plus minerals to meet requirements.

Lehmkuhler recommends hay for lactating cows, but he notes that cornstalks may be worked into the diet to stretch hay supplies with proper supplementation.

To extend hay inventories, feeding cornstalk bales is a reasonable option. Remember to work with a nutritionist to meet all nutritional requirements and supplement as needed. Lehmkuhler advises to not overpay for cornstalks since supplements, along with additional feed costs, will often be needed. ~ excerpt from Michaela King, Hay and Forage Grower, November 2019

Forage Timely Tips: December

- ✓ Begin utilizing stockpiled pastures. Graze pastures with orchardgrass and clovers first. Save tall fescue pastures for late winter grazing.
- ✓ Using polywire, strip graze stockpiled pastures to improve Utilization. Start at the water source and allocate enough forage to for 2-3 days. Back fencing is not necessary.
- ✓ Make plans to frost seed red and white clover onto closely grazed tall fescue pastures in February.
- ✓ Some hay can be fed as stockpiled grass is grazed to stretch grasses.
- ✓ Begin hay feeding as stockpiled forage is used up.
- ✓ Supplement hay as needed.
- ✓ Minimizing waste by utilizing ring feeders.

Kick the Hay Habit!! **Why you should be out of the hay business...**

Jim Gerrish

American GrazingLands Services LLC

KY Grazing Conferences videos now available

We had an outstanding Grazing Conference in Boone and Christian counties in late October. The theme was “Kicking the Hay Habit: Optimizing Profitability”. The keynote speaker was Jim Gerrish from American Grazinglands Services, LLC, who delivered the opening and closing presentations. The videos from this conference can be found on the KYForages YouTube Channel in a playlist entitled “Kicking the Hay Habit”. If you were unable to attend, please take a few minutes and watch these videos.

Looks like a long hay feeding season

I hope I am wrong, but it looks like we will be feeding hay soon. Incredibly that would mean a six month hay feeding season. Ugh. There has never been a better time to get our hay-feeding house in order. Here are few thoughts on that subject.

First, graze out all of your pastures, but don't buzz them unless you are going to replant or renovate them. Don't forget that you can strip graze any remaining forage on hayfields using temporary fence and water sources.

Test all of your hay. This is essential. The best way to not repeat last year's train wreck of a winter-feeding season is to test your hay and feed accordingly. Send the sample to a certified lab (and your agent can help you find one of those, and most have hay probes for loan as well). UK has a very simple online tool to help find the right supplement for cow rations, and you can even enter the data on smartphone (I've done it!). It is called the UK Beef Cow Forage Supplement Tool (<http://forage-supplement-tool.ca.uky.edu/>).

Price out the supplements dictated by your hay quality. Ask your supplier if they can give a discount for booking early.

Weigh some of your bales to determine average bale weight. Cows will generally eat 2% of their body weight every day. So factor in a figure for wastage, and calculate your total hay needs.

See if you can reduce hay feeding losses. Using a hay feeder that has solid sheeting at the bottom will prevent cows from pulling hay out of the ring. Feeders of this kind dropped hay feeding losses from 20% to 5%.

Lastly, start now to secure more hay if needed. Anecdotal reports of prices paid for poor hay last March rival that of high quality western hay six months before. There are reputable professional hay brokers that can help you get your supply of hay topped off for this winter if needed.

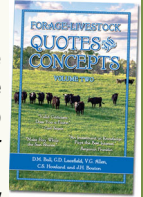
There is still plenty you can do, including reducing storing losses, supplementing smarter, reducing feeding waste and even securing additional hay. But start with getting your hay tested. Really. It is that important. Happy foraging. ~ excerpted from Jimmy Henning, Farmers Pride, Nov. 2019

KFGC Membership Renewals

It's that time of the year to renew your KFGC membership. If your email address is on file, you will be receiving an email asking you to renew your membership. If not, or if you are a new member, you may pay online at www.AFGC.org and select Kentucky as your Affiliate Council or send a check with you name, address, phone number, and email address to: KFGC c/o Jimmy Henning, N-222D Ag. Science North, Lexington, KY 40546-0091. Membership dues support the mission of KFGC to provide practical, research-based pasture, hay, baleage, and silage information as well as professional development for producers, scientists, educators and industry representatives. Additionally, you automatically become a member of the American Forage and Grassland Council. Annual dues are \$25.

Quote of the Month: If You Don't Know Where You're Going, You'll Wind Up Somewhere Else ~ Yogi Berra

Planning is an important activity. The management plan for a forage-livestock system should address the needs of that specific operation, which should include being consistent with the manager's goals. Planning and goals are essential for success, and it is important to update them on a regular basis. Order your copy of Forage-Livestock Quote and Concepts, vol. 2, today at <https://forages.ca.uky.edu/content/forage-books>



Publication of the Month: Cover Crop Benefits and Challenges in Kentucky (AGR-240)

A cover crop is a plant species that is grown between cash crops primarily to provide cropping system services rather than to produce a harvestable product. Services provided by cover crops include soil health improvement, soil conservation, nutrient release and capture, and weed suppression. However, like any management practice, cover crops also have challenges and limitations. This publication is intended to provide an overview of cover crop use in Kentucky and the challenges and benefits of this practice. As more research is completed, we expect additional publications to address specific management questions regarding cover crops. Find this and other forage publications on the UK Forage website and click “Publications”.

Upcoming Events

(see website for details and online registration)

JAN 5-8- AFGC Annual Conference, Greenville, SC

JAN 17 - Forages at KCA, Owensboro, KY

FEB 20 - Alfalfa Conference, Elizabethtown, KY

MAR 19 - Novel Tall Fescue Workshop, Lexington, KY

APR 21-22 - KY Grazing School, Princeton, KY

APR 28-30 - So. Pasture and Forage Crop Improvement Conference, Montgomery, AL

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