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UK Forage News

Keeping Forage-Livestock Producers in Kentucky Informed

Dr. Ray Smith and Krista Lea, editors

February 2022

This issue of Forage News is sponsored by Growmark/FS Forage Seeds, now available at Southern States.



If you would like to receive this newsletter via email, please visit: <https://kyforagenews.com/sign-up/>

Silage and Baleage a big focus for the 2022 Kentucky Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference

The Warren County Ext. office is hosting this years KY Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference on Feb. 24.

7:30(CST) Registration and Exhibits

8:00 Welcome and overview for the day - Brett Reese, Southern States, President of KFGC

8:15 The biology of silage fermentation and additives - Dr. Chris Teutsch, University of Kentucky

8:45 Species and variety options for baleage - Dr. Ray Smith, University of Kentucky

9:15 Harvest timing and moisture determination - Dr. Jimmy Henning and Ben Connor, University of Kentucky

9:45 Break—Visit exhibits and silent auction

10:15 Mowing and conditioning for baleage: Equipment adjustment and harvest management

Dr. Jessica Williamson, AGCO

11:00 Alfalfa insect update - Dr. Lee Townsend (ret.) University of Kentucky

11:30 Lunch, Alfalfa awards, Silent auction results

12:30 Optimizing quality with bale density and time of wrapping - Dr. Jessica Williamson, AGCO

1:00 Round bale silage: Farmer results in Kentucky - Dr. Jimmy Henning, University of Kentucky

1:30 Baled silage panel: Making high quality baleage - Dr. Jessica Williamson and Craig Cohron, producer

2:30 Final Comments and Survey Collection

3:00 Adjourn

Register at <https://kyalfalfa2022.eventbrite.com>.

Pastures Please!! 12th Annual Winter Horse program

The Fayette County Extension Office is hosting Pastures Please!! On Monday, February 21st beginning at 5:30 pm. Topics include Evaluating Pasture Health, Controlling Foxtail and Buttercup, and Plants That Shouldn't Be In Your Pastures. Register for this free event at <https://pasturesplease2022.eventbrite.com>.

Pub of the Month: Renovating Hay and Pasture Fields (AGR-26).

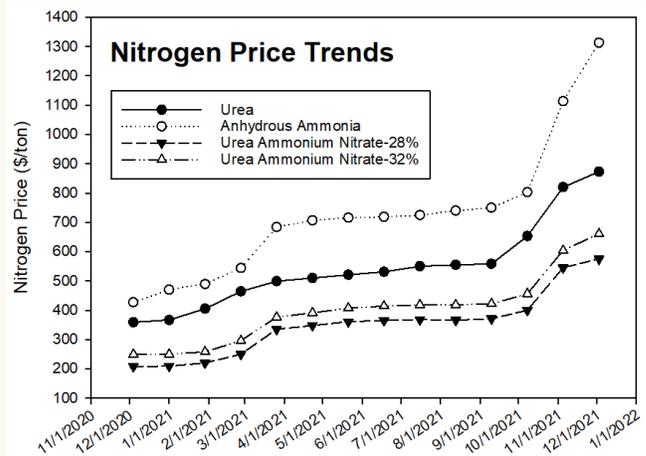
Renovate means to renew and improve. This publication discusses managing a pasture or hay field that has become less productive and renovating or "renewing" it so that it will become more

productive. In Kentucky, this usually means adding lime and fertilizer, controlling weeds, and planting an adapted legume such as red clover and/or ladino white clover. The primary benefits of renovation come as a result of getting legumes established in grass-dominated fields. Download at Forage website under Establishment.

Frost Seeding Clover: Getting it Right!

Legumes play in sustainable grassland ecosystems. This is especially true at current fertilizer prices. Nitrogen prices have continued to increase (Figure 1). Currently, one pound of nitrogen as urea is coming in at \$0.95. The following article provides some practical suggestions for establishing and maintaining legumes in your pastures.

Figure 1. Nitrogen price trends over the last 12 months.



Soil test and adjust fertility. In order for clover and other improved legumes to persist and thrive in pastures, we must create an environment conducive to their growth. This starts with soil fertility. Prior to frost seeding clover, lime and fertilize pastures according to soil test recommendations.

Suppress sod and decrease residue. The existing sod must be suppressed and plant residue reduced prior to frost seeding. The reduction in plant residue allows seed to reach the soil surface where it can be incorporated by freezing and thawing events. Sod suppression and residue reduction is best accomplished by hard grazing in late fall and early winter.

Ensure good soil-seed contact. Good soil-seed contact is required for seed germination and emergence. In frost seedings, this occurs when freezing and thawing cycles form cracks in the soil surface, often referred to as a honeycomb.

Seed on Proper Date. Frost seeding is best accomplished in late winter or very early spring (February and early March). Frost seeding is accomplished by simply broadcasting the seed on the soil surface and allowing the freezing and thawing cycles to incorporate the seed into the soil. Success with frost seeding can be enhanced by dragging your pasture as or immediately after or as you broadcast the seed.

Use High-Quality Seed and Adapted Varieties. Use either certified or proprietary seed to ensure high germination, seed genetics, and low noxious weed content. Do NOT use VNS or Variety Not Stated seed since there is no way to tell how it will perform in Kentucky.

Choose clover varieties that have been tested in Kentucky. The University of Kentucky has one of the most extensive variety testing programs in the country. The 2021 variety testing results can be found on the [UK Forage Extension](#) website or by visiting your local extension office.

Use correct seeding rate. In Kentucky, a good mixture for frost seeding is 6-8 lb/A of red clover, 1-2 lb/A of ladino or grazing white clover. On rented farms or where soil fertility is marginal, adding 10-15 lb/A of annual lespedeza to this mixture can be beneficial.

Calibrate seeding equipment. Maintain and calibrate seeding equipment prior to seeding. Several approaches to calibrating small spinner seeders or no-till drills can be viewed on the KYForages YouTube Channel.

Inoculate Legume Seed. Most improved clover seed comes with a clay-based coating that contains inoculant. Make sure that the seed is fresh and has not been stored under adverse conditions. If the seed is not pre-inoculated, inoculate it with the proper strain of nitrogen fixing bacteria prior to seeding. This is relatively inexpensive insurance that legume roots will be well nodulated and efficient nitrogen fixation will take place.

Control Seeding Depth. Small-seeded forages should be placed than 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep. If using a drill always check seeding depth since it will vary with seedbed condition and soil moisture status. Placing small-seeded forages too deep will universally result in stand failures. Since frost seeding broadcasts the seed on top of the soil, this problem is minimized.

Check seed distribution pattern. When using a spinner type spreader/seeder make sure and check you spreading pattern. In many cases small-seeded forages are not thrown as far as you think. This can result in clover strips in your pastures rather than a uniform stand.

Use GPS guidance to eliminate overlaps and misses. A recent study conducted at UK Research and Education Center in Princeton found that frost seeding without GPS Guidance resulted in a 35% overlap. Using GPS guidance reduced the overlap to 3%. At an overlap of 20% and an overseeding cost of \$30/A, a portable GPS unit will pay for itself in less than 250 acres.

Control Post-Seeding Competition. Not controlling post-seeding competition is one of the most common causes of stand failures. One of the best management practices is to leave cattle on pastures that have been overseeded with clover until the

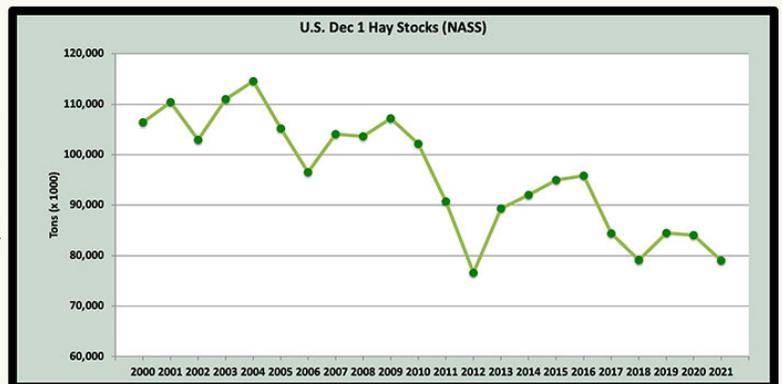
Forage Timely Tips: February

- ✓ Continue grazing stockpiled tall fescue if available.
- ✓ Assess grass stands. If thin, consider adding legumes.
- ✓ Begin frost seeding with at least 6 lb/A red and 1 lb/A white clover on closely grazed pastures.
- ✓ On pastures with lower fertility, consider adding 10 -15 lb/A annual lespedeza to the above recommendation.
- ✓ Consider applying nitrogen in mid to late February on some pastures to promote early growth.
- ✓ Sign up for shared use drills for spring renovation.
- ✓ Service and calibrate no-till drills

clover seedlings get tall enough to get grazed off. Then remove animals from the pasture and allow that clover to reach a height of 6-8 inches. At that time the paddock can be placed back into the rotation. If the existing vegetation is not controlled, the new clover seedlings will be shaded out. ~ Chris Teutsch, Cow Country News

No Surprise: 2021 Hay Production was down

The annual release of hay and forage data by USDA that defines the previous year's hay production and year-ending inventories arrived in email inboxes last Thursday. Overall, virtually all forage production metrics were down in 2021 compared to the previous year — even corn silage production. In the case of many states, drought was the reason that forage production suffered. This caused a reshuffling of state rankings for both hay and haylage production. Read the full article in Hay and Forage Grower (<https://hayandforage.com/>)



article-3793-No-surprise-2021-hay-production-was-down.html) for detailed, state by state numbers.

Upcoming Events (see Forage website for details and to register, click on EVENTS)

Feb. 21—Pastures Please! Equine Program, Lexington
Feb 24—Kentucky Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference, Bowling Green, KY

Mar 8— Virtual Novel Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop
Subscribe or access full articles at the UK Forage Website www.forages.ca.uky.edu. Go to the forage website to access the “KY Forages YouTube Channel” for recordings of recent conferences including the fall KY Grazing Conference.

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