

FORAGE NEWS

For more forage information, visit our UK Forage Extension Website at: <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/>

July 2016

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Heart of America Conf. Highlight: Native Warm-Season Grasses (NWSG): Naturally Adapted Productive Pastures

The series of severe droughts between 2007-2012 resulted in decreases in cattle numbers in the southeast. Some of the impact of these droughts may have been offset if producers had reliable, drought-resilient summer forages. Beginning in 2008, a group of researchers at the Univ. of TN started a series of studies designed to evaluate the potential of Native Warm Season Grasses (NWSG) to compliment to tall fescue.

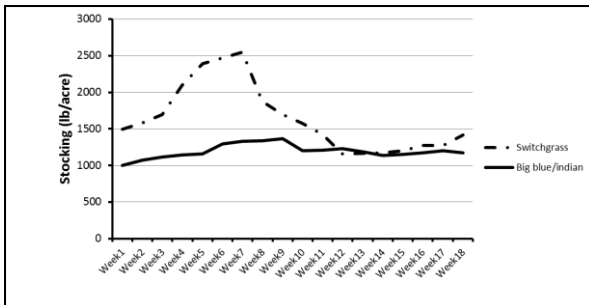


Figure 1. Stocking rate (lb/acre) for switchgrass and a big bluestem/indiangrass blend. Week 1 is the last week of April.

One lesson learned from this study was that these grasses had higher carrying capacities than anticipated. Based on 60 units of nitrogen (N) per acre applied each spring (late April), carrying capacity was over 1,000 pounds of live animal per acre, season long (Figure 1). Switchgrass was especially productive reaching a peak in late May - early June of 2,500 lb/acre. This stocking translates into 145 animal unit days (AUD) per acre for BB/IG, 198 for SG, and 206 for EG.

Based on research to date, it appears that NWSG can provide a valuable, high quality source of summer forage that can effectively complement tall fescue production systems.

~ Dr. Pat Keyser See full article and all Heart of America Proceedings at www.uky.edu/ag/forage.

Nitrate Test Kits available- KY County Extension Offices

Because nitrate poisoning is a significant concern in the summer months, Nitrate Test Kits have once again been made available to county extension offices by Ext. Director Dr. Gary Palmer. Producers are asked to contact their local county agent if they are concerned about nitrate poisoning and would like to test their forages (see article below).

KY County Agents: If you have not yet requested your nitrate test kit, please contact ukforageextension@uky.edu. Supplies are limited and are first come first serve basis.

Featured Publication: Forage-Related Disorders in Cattle: Nitrate Poisoning (UK pub ID-217)

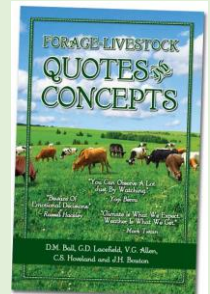
Drought-stressed sorghum and/or corn are the source of most of the forage-related cases of nitrate poisoning in Kentucky, but wheat, sudangrass, rye, pearl millet, soybeans, beets, *Brassica* spp. (rape, kale, turnips, swedes) and oats can also accumulate nitrates. Common weeds that are nitrate accumulators include ragweed, pigweed, thistle, bindweed, dock, jimsonweed, and johnsongrass.

Few plants normally contain high nitrate levels, since under normal growing conditions the nitrates are converted to protein as quickly as they are absorbed from the roots. However, under certain conditions such as high nitrogen fertilization, drought or abrupt changes in weather, plants can develop dangerously high nitrate levels. The main problem with excess nitrates is that they are converted in the rumen to nitrites that are absorbed in the bloodstream and ultimately prevent the red blood cells from carrying life-giving oxygen. Death or abortion may result as a consequence of nitrate intoxication. Care must be taken to recognize possible toxic forages and manage them appropriately to avoid animal loss. The laboratory you intend to use or your local county agent can provide specific instructions for nitrate testing.

Forage News Quote of the Month

“Insanity: Doing the Same Thing Over and Over Again and Expecting Different Results”

We’ve all done it – it didn’t work this time but we’ll keep trying and trying. However, there may be better approaches. If it didn’t work, stop and find the reason. Change the approach. Remove the impediment to success. Get advice from persons who are knowledgeable and who can provide additional information and a different perspective. Forage-livestock production is an expensive endeavor. At every opportunity and in all areas of forage-livestock management, one should stack the deck to favor success. To purchase the Forage-Livestock Quotes and Concepts book, contact KFGC at ukforageextension@uky.edu. Books are \$5 each.



Program and registration - KFGC Annual Field Day

This year’s Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council Annual Field Day will be held at the Edenshale Research and demonstration Farm on Tuesday, Sept. 13th (245 Eden Shale

Road, Owenton, KY 40359) with registration beginning at 3:30 pm and a meal at 6:30. Topics include: Farm Overview, Novel Endophyte Tall Fescue and Seedhead Suppression, Alternative Summer Forages to Maximize Beef Gain in Kentucky, Rainfall Collection Watering Systems and Manure Management for Livestock Producers, and Russell Hackley's Legacy to Forages in KY and the U.S. Register online at <http://KFGCFieldDay.eventbrite.com> or by calling 502-484-5703. This event is supported by the KFGC, Kentucky Beef Network, Owen County Extension Service and the University of Kentucky, CAFE.

Scott County Field Day Replaces Annual UK Equine Field Day for 2016

The Annual Scott County Field Day will be hosted by Old Friends Farm on July 15th 4:30-7:30 and replaces the annual UK Equine Farm and Facilities Day for 2016. Old Friends is home to over 100 retired race horses including 1997 and 2002 KY Derby winners Silver Charm and War Emblem. Highlights include hands-on exhibits and field demonstrations.

Dairymen and Horse Owners: Caution with rye straw

Due to a shortage of wheat straw in the United States, more and more dairy and equine operations are switching to rye straw for bedding. According to experts at the UK CAFÉ, this can be a good option, but there are several unique considerations with rye straw. Unlike wheat, where the grain is harvested first and the remaining stems are cut and baled, with rye, the whole plant is usually harvested and baled. This means the seed heads are still on the plant. The seed heads of rye have awns or appendages that may cause gum irritation. Another consideration with rye straw is the risk of ergot. Ergot is caused by fungi and is poisonous to livestock when infected cereal grasses are consumed. In horses, the most common signs are lactation failure or deficiency, prolonged gestation and fertility problems and in dairy cattle reduced milk production. Ergot bodies, look similar to mouse droppings and occur in the place of healthy seed. Often ergot bodies fall off during the raking and baling process. However, inspect rye straw being used as bedding to ensure it is free of ergot bodies. If ergot bodies are found, use caution because of potential toxic concentrations of ergot alkaloids. Additional info: <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/plantsci/crops/pp551.pdf>.

~ UK CAFÉ Press Release June 7, 2016

The Forage-Livestock Community Says Goodbye to a Forage Legend: Russell Hackley

Russell Hackley passed away June 12 one day before his 74th birthday. Russell was a patriot devoted to God, family, agriculture, and his community. With wisdom and wit, his stories, quotes, and insight often entertained, taught, and challenged those who knew him. His love for the land, implementation of rotational grazing practices, and utilization

of forage species in his beef cattle production earned him multiple local, state, and national awards, including Master Conservationist, Outstanding Grassland Farmer, and Forage Spokesperson Awards, among others. He traveled four continents, learning about agriculture methods and innovations in various countries.



In addition, he served his industry through multiple leadership positions, including KCA's Foundation board member,

Regional VP of KCA, KCA Executive Committee member, board member of both the KFGC and AFGC, and as a board member of the U.S. Meat Export Federation. He was also a proud member of the Grayson County Cattlemen's Association. ~ *Portions of obituary reprinted from the Grayson County News Gazette, June 14-15.*

Webinar on Hi-Gest® Low Lignin Alfalfa

Currently, two varieties of Low Lignin alfalfa varieties have been released, Hi-Gest® (Dow AgroSciences) and HarvXtra™ (Forage Genetics International). There will be a 45 min webinar update on Hi-Gest® Thursday, March 21st, at 10 a.m. or 12 noon EDT. Presenters will update participants about the acceptance, fiber digestibility and on-farm performance of Hi-Gest® Low Lignin Alfalfa since its commercialization in October 2014. The webinar's technical content will be the same at either session; however, the 10a.m. session will be more focused to the Eastern U.S. dairy/alfalfa management practices, and the later session will be better suited to dairy/commercial hay grower practices found in the Western U.S. Register now!
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/rt/8126740405637354243>

New Holland Product Support Kits

Keep your haying equipment in "tip-top" shape. A product support kit is a collection of OEM parts that comes as a single packaged unit with all of the parts needed to make a repair or upgrade, along with hardware and instruction sheets for easy repairs/installations. Kits are usually offered as one package - one part number - and can offer savings in terms of both time and money. For farmers who do their own equipment repair and maintenance, kits give the confidence of having all of the components needed to complete a job, allowing for faster repairs and allowing machines to be easily be updated to include the latest technology, boosting productivity and trade-in value. Check with your equipment dealer for available kits. ~ *From Canadian Forage and Grassland Council Newsletter*

Details on AFGC New Zealand Tour Signup

The American Forage and Grassland Council is pleased to host a 2016 New Zealand Tour October 23 to Nov 5, 2016. This trip will forever change the way you view forage-based agriculture as you will be inspired by the passion for pastoral farming systems that you see in NZ. View the tentative agenda at www.afgc.org and select the tour from the Events menu. Space is limited to 30 participants. Registration fee for the tour will be \$2800 for AFGC members and \$2850 for non-members for 10 days and \$4100 for members and \$4150 for non-members for 14 days. The 14-Day tour will include transportation and lodging for the New Zealand Grassland Association Annual Conference. The registration fee for the New Zealand Grassland Association Annual Conference is not included. There is a non-refundable deposit of \$1000 due by September 1, 2016 with full payment due by September 15, 2016.

Upcoming Events (www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage)

JULY 14 – Equine Field Day. Scott County, KY
JULY 17-22 International Rangeland Congress. SK, Canada.
AUG 11 Organic Assoc KY Pasture Walk. Washington Co.
SEPT 13 KFGC Field Day. Edenshale Farm
SEPT 22 Beef Bash. Princeton, KY
OCT 19 KY Grazing Conference. Somerset, KY
JAN 22-24 AFGC Annual Meeting, Roanoke, VA