



FORAGE NEWS

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Looking Ahead to Plant Annuals

Summer annual grasses provide an important forage crop option for producers in Kentucky. These grasses are mainly used as emergency or supplemental hay and pasture crops, but little information is available on their yield potential. The 2015 Annual Grass Report (PR-704, available at UK Forage Website under “Variety Trials”) includes yield, maturity and seedling vigor ratings for warm season grasses such as sudangrass, sorghum x sudangrass hybrids, forage sorghum pearl millet and teff. Cool season annual cereals include wheat, rye, oats and triticale. Table 27 of this report summarizes yield trial results from 2008 through 2015 for sudangrass varieties in Kentucky and Table 30 contains results for pearl millet in years 2013-2015. Numbers reported represent performance as a percentage of the average for the trial. Therefore, varieties with means above 100 are considered to be the better performers. The fine stems and fast regrowth of sudangrass make it an excellent choice as a hay crop or pasture. Pearl millet is more drought tolerant than sudan or sorghum/sudan and does not have the risk of prussic acid toxicity.

Table 27. Summary of Kentucky sudangrass yield trials 2008-2015 (yield shown as a percentage of the mean of the commercial varieties in the trial).

Variety	Proprietor/KY Distributor	Lexington								Mean ³ (#trials)	
		2008 ^{1,2}	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015		
AS9301 BMR ⁴	Alta Seeds/Ramer Seed				99	94	118	91	83	91	92(6)
Enorma BMR	Cal/West Seeds										
FSG 1000 BMR	Farm Science Genetics									101	
Hayking BMR	Central Farm Supply	111	112	91	97	97	96	92	94	99(8)	
Monarch V	Public	104	96	102	97	93	98	110	99	100(8)	
Piper	Public	90	91	97	94	104	105	89	94	96(8)	
ProMax BMR	Ampac Seed	95	101	110	115	96	103	100	111	104(8)	
SS130 BMR	Cal/West Seeds						107	106	110	105(5)	
Trudan Headless	Chromatin							118			

¹ Establishment year.

² Use this summary table as a guide in making variety decisions, but refer to specific tables in this report to determine statistical differences in forage yield between varieties.

³ Mean only presented when respective variety was included in two or more trials.

⁴ BMR (Brown Mid-rib) means that a variety has been developed to produce lower amounts of lignin which usually translates into higher quality.

Table 30. Summary of Kentucky pearl millet yield trials 2013-2015 (yield shown as a percentage of the mean of the commercial varieties in the trial).

Variety	Proprietor/KY Distributor	2013 ^{1,2}	2014	2015	Mean ³ (#trials)
		FSG 300	Farm Science Genetics		
FSG 315 Dwarf BMR	Farm Science Genetics			101	
Pennleaf Hybrid	Pennington Seed	93	91	94	93(3)
PP102M Hybrid	Cisco	93	93	90	92(3)
SS501	Southern States	90	99	96	95(3)
SS635	Southern States	108	112	101	107(3)
Tiffleaf III Hybrid	Gayland Ward Seed	116	106	108	110(3)

¹ Establishment year.

² Use this summary table as a guide in making variety decisions, but refer to specific tables in this report to determine statistical differences in forage yield between varieties.

³ Mean only presented when respective variety was included in two or more trials.

2016 Kentucky Grazing School Planned for May

The Kentucky Grazing School will be held on May 17-18, 2016 at the Woodford County Extension office and the Oran C. Little Research Center in Versailles, KY. This two-day program includes hands-on exercises, such as building temporary paddocks and watering systems, and assessing pasture production. Classroom discussions will cover topics including forages, animal management, and grazing systems. Emphasis will be on spring and summer grazing management for ruminant species.

Enrollment is limited, so apply early. Past participants range from new to experienced grazers and all have gained new information and skills to implement on their operations. All past participants have indicated that attending motivated them to make changes to their grazing systems to improve their operations.

Pre-register for the grazing school as enrollment is limited to the first 45 who register. The \$50.00 registration fee includes all materials, grazing manuals, breaks, and lunch both days. This program is partially funded through the Governor’s Office of Agriculture Policy. To register, contact Austin Sexten, Master Grazer Coordinator, at (859) 257-7512 or austin.sexten@uky.edu. Program and additional information can be found the UK Forage Website.

Heart of America Grazing Conference Highlight: Grazing Alfalfa: Producer Bob Hall Perspective

Scott County native Robert (Bob) Hall, Jr. is a man of many hats. He and his wife Bonnie have embarked on many ventures on their farm including sheep, hogs and tobacco. Hall was born and raised on the farm outside of Georgetown, where he currently resides and operates a stocker operation. Some may recognize Hall for the feed mill he purchased in the 1960’s known as Hallway Feeds. Early in the Mill’s history over 90 percent of their sales were to dairy producers. Now 95 percent of company’s sales go to the equine industry.

While Hall is most notably known for building Hallway Feed, he is also known regionally for his cattle and pasture management skills. Hall has always tried to utilize grazing to get the most out of the cattle on his farm. His 110 acre farm is divided into 17 paddocks and have a variety of forage mixes in the pastures including orchard grass, alfalfa, bluegrass, red clover, and tall fescue. There are three water pens strategically located throughout the farm to provide water to each of the paddocks. In a typical year Hall grazes the farm with two groups of cattle. One group of 130-135 head that are rotated every three days. A second smaller group of 65-70

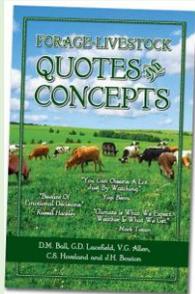
head are rotated through a different portion of the farm every five to seven days depending on the forage production. Hall says, "When evaluating your pastures and you think you have another day, it's time to move them." Additionally, cattle are not moved into new pasture prior to five in the afternoon in an attempt to alleviate bloat "because the cattle are already full."

When it comes to managing his pastures Hall employs several practices to provide the best forage possible for his animals. No grasses are allowed to go to seed on the farm in an effort to keep them vegetative and keep quality higher. Cattle rotation in combination with pasture clipping at certain times of the year helps keep the grasses growing. Hall also makes a point to graze his alfalfa only once a month and has not had any bloat problems for a number of years.

Bob is dedicated to continuing to improve his operation and has attended both the KY Grazing School and Advanced Grazing School put on by the Master Grazer Program. If you would like to learn more about his operation, including his cattle health protocol, cattle purchasing philosophy, follow the link to the UK Ag video interview: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N4FK20YFfdU&feature=youtu.be> or view the Heart of America Grazing Conference Proceedings at the UK Forage Website. ~Bob Hall

Forage News Quote of the Month
"Cutting Late Increases Hay Weight;
Cutting Early Increases Animal Weight"

Deciding when to cut hay is a major decision hay producers face. Early-cut hay has higher quality, whereas waiting longer to cut hay results in higher yield. However, the higher yield results largely from increased fiber, which is less digestible. It is psychologically satisfying to have a high yield, but is it worth it? The answer to that depends on whether the late-cut hay will meet the nutritional requirements of the animals that will eat it. If not, lowering forage quality (and animal performance) by harvesting hay at a later-than-optimum stage as well as handling more hay weight is a disadvantage, not an advantage. To purchase the Forage-Livestock Quotes and Concepts book, contact KFGC at ukforageextension@uky.edu. Books are \$5 each.



Windrow Moisture Testing Made Easy

Producing high quality alfalfa hay has always been a challenge. The industry is constantly pursuing new technologies to help the hay producer grow and package a consistently high-quality forage. The age-old method of twisting a handful of alfalfa until it breaks is a good way to know when the hay is dry enough to bale, but unfortunately by the time hay is dry by this method it is too dry for good leaf retention.

Some producers today insert an electronic moisture probe into a handful of alfalfa from the underside of sample windrows to get an idea of the moisture. While this is a step up from the twist test, the probe will tend to provide data suggesting the hay is dryer than it actually may be.

Ron Thaumert, Idaho extension educator, and Glenn Shewmaker, University of Idaho forage specialist, performed a study and developed an inexpensive tool that can be made with a few simple supplies from the local hardware store to replicate the compaction and density of a hay in a bale. The

full article including directions to build the moisture testing tool can be found at in the online April issue of Progressive Forage Grower at www.progressiveforage.com.

~ Michael J Thomas for Progressive Forage Grower

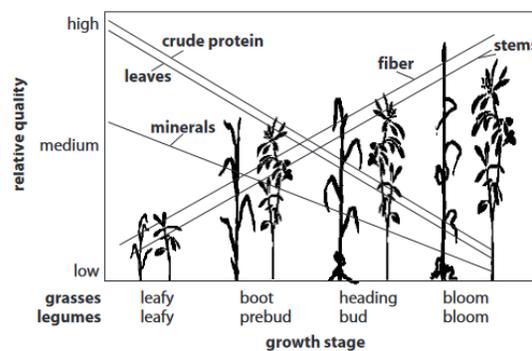
Featured Publication: Understanding Forage Quality

Forage quality is defined in various ways but is often poorly understood. It represents a simple concept, yet encompasses much complexity. Though important, forage quality often receives far less consideration than it deserves.

Adequate animal nutrition is essential for high rates of gain, ample milk production, efficient reproduction and adequate profits. However forage quality varies greatly among and within forage crops, and nutritional needs vary among and within animal species and classes. Producing suitable quality forage for a given situation requires knowing the factors that affect forage quality, then exercising management accordingly. Analyzing forages for nutrient content can be used to determine whether quality is adequate and to guide proper ration supplementation.

In recent years, advances in plant and animal breeding, introduction of new products, and development of new management approaches have made it possible to increase animal performance. However, for this to be realized, there must be additional focus on forage quality. The full publication can be found at:

<http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/ForageQuality.pdf>.



Source: Adapted from Blaser, R., R.C. Hammes, Jr., J.P. Fontenot, H.T. Bryant, C.E. Polan, D.D. Wolf, F.S. McClaugherty, R.G. Klein, and J.S. Moore. 1986. Forage-animal management systems. Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Bulletin 86-7.

Forage Trip Planned to New Zealand

The American Forage and Grassland Council is planning a forage focused tour of New Zealand Oct. 23 – Nov. 7, 2016. More information can be found at www.afgc.org. If you would like to receive up-dates as they become available, please register at <http://eepurl.com/bMn3wv>. This will not commit you to the trip, but will keep you informed of plans and deadlines as they arise.

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

- MAY 2-4 So. Pasture and Forage Conference. Monroe, LA
- MAY 3 Alltech News and Brews Forage Conference, Lexington, KY
- MAY 14 UK Equine Nutrition Short Course, Lexington, KY
- MAY 17-18 KY Grazing School, Versailles, KY
- JUNE 16 Forage Establishment Field Day, Edenshale Farm
- JUNE 19-25 National Forage Week
- JULY 17-22 International Rangeland Congress, SK, Canada.
- SEPT 13 KFGC Field Day, Edenshale Farm
- SEPT 22 Beef Bash, Princeton, KY
- OCT 19 Fall Grazing Conference, Somerset, KY