

# FORAGE NEWS

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

**November 2015**

*S. Ray Smith, Extension Forage Specialist and Krista Lea, MS*

## Debby Dulworth as Keynote Speaker on Extending the Grazing Season at Heart of America Grazing Conference

Toby and Debby Dulworth own and operate Dogwood Farm Herefords in LaCenter, KY, a grass-fed direct marketing farm raising registered polled Herefords since 1964. Here is a preview from Debby's presentation on "How Diversity Extends the Grazing Season at Dogwood Farm"



*One of our favorite forages to show people when they visit our farm is Eastern gamagrass, which grows on about ten acres of land at opposite remote edges of our farm at the southwest and northeast corners. Once established, gamagrass is a very hardy native perennial, and if it is managed correctly, grazed and rested as it was in the days of native bison, it can become completely self-*

*sustaining as a mature stand. In August, during the exceptional drought of 2012, our two gamagrass fields were just about the only green places on our farm.*

The Heart of America Grazing Conference will be held January 25-26, 2016 at the Hilton Downtown in Lexington KY. Early registration is available before Jan. 13 for a discount. Schedule, accommodations and registration information is available at [www.uky.edu/ag/forages](http://www.uky.edu/ag/forages).  
~ Krista Lea

## Study Shows No Damage to Soils from Grazing of Cover Crops

Cover crops reduce soil erosion, boost organic matter, keep more moisture in soil and sequester carbon in the soil so less of it is released as a greenhouse gas.

Conventional wisdom holds that if cattle are allowed to graze on cover crops, they would eat up and remove the nitrogen and carbon otherwise left on the soil in the cover crop plant residue. Allowing cattle to tread on the soil also could compact it, preventing air and water from passing through the soil to reach plant roots.

Research by the United States Dept. of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS) showed that a relatively low-level of grazing did not significantly affect the amount of organic matter in soil and did not compact the soil. They also found that cover crops provided high quality forage and that the organic matter lost by allowing cattle to graze on cover crops was likely made up in the organic material

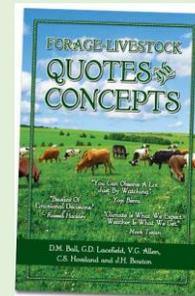
supplied as manure. As in previous studies, they also found that no-till soils generally contained more carbon and nitrogen than conventional till soils. ~ Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland News

### Forage News Quote of the Month

**"If You Don't Soil Test, You'll Be Forced to Guess"**

~ Dr. Jennifer Johnson

Many experiments have been conducted to determine the levels of plant nutrients needed to maintain a competitive, productive and economically advantageous forage stand. Of the 17 elements essential for plant growth, the macronutrients nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium are most likely to be needed in substantial quantities. However, other nutrients, especially the secondary nutrients calcium, sulfur and magnesium and occasionally trace minerals (need assessed by plant tissue testing) may need to be added as well. The only way to know what amounts of various nutrients should be added is to take soil samples and have them analyzed by a reputable soil testing laboratory. Applying less fertilizer than is needed will hurt plant performance. Applying more fertilizer than needed is costly, wasteful and may negatively affect plant growth and the environment. To purchase the Forage-Livestock Quotes and Concepts book, contact KFGC at [ukforageextension@uky.edu](mailto:ukforageextension@uky.edu). Books are \$5 each.



## Get the Most out of Grazing Corn Stalks

Corn harvest is ongoing and cows are starting to graze the stalks. Grazing corn stalks during the winter has many benefits. It can save one a dollar a day per cow compared to feeding expensive hay.

But the way you manage grazing of stalks by your cattle can have a big effect on its success. For instance, maybe you want to feed as little protein supplement as possible while winter grazing. Then you must make sure you have enough acres of corn stalks so your cattle only need to select just the higher quality plant parts to eat. And whenever the grain and husks are gone, move to a fresh field.

Or, maybe you use stalks just as a filler to keep cattle from bellowing while you limit feed corn, distiller's grains or other more nutrient dense feeds. Then high stocking levels and unrestricted access might be best.

Another strategy might be to stretch winter stalks as far as possible. In that case, restricting animal access to smaller areas at a time by strip grazing until nearly all the grazable stalks are gone might be best. Be careful, though, about forcing cows to eat the lower stalks. They won't get much protein or energy from lower stalks but the nitrate levels might be dangerously high.

Whatever your strategy, consider carefully what kind of nutrition animals are getting from the stalk pasture so you neither underfeed nor overfeed expensive supplements. Be sure to provide salt, calcium, phosphorus and vitamin A free choice at all times. And once all the grain is gone, cows need about half a pound per day of an all-natural protein to meet nutrient needs.

Stalk season is here. Make wise decisions to use them best. ~ Bruce Anderson, Univ. of Nebraska

### 2016 Kentucky Small Ruminant Grazing Conference schedule announced

This year's Kentucky Small Ruminant Grazing Conference will be held on Saturday, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup> at the Boyd County Fairgrounds. Registration fee of \$30 includes lunch and educational materials. Additional FAMACHA training is available for \$15.

- 7:30 Registration Begins
- 8:30 Welcome – Dr. David Ditsch
- 8:40 Economics and Marketing Update - Tess Caudill
- 9:15 Small Ruminant Pasture and How to Get the Most Out of Them – Mark Kennedy
- 10:00 Isoflavones: The Hidden Benefit of Clovers – Dr. Michael Flythe
- 10:45 Stomach Worm x breed x management interactions – Dr. Don Ely
- 11:45 Lunch
- 12:30 Co-Grazing other Species with Small Ruminants – Mark Kennedy
- 1:30 Producer Panel Discussion
- 2:30 Adjourn
- 2:45 FAMACHA Training – Dr. Beth Johnson, DVM

More info can be found online at [www.uky.edu/ag/forages](http://www.uky.edu/ag/forages). Registration deadline is Jan. 25<sup>th</sup>.

### Muhlenberg County Producer and Ag Teacher to Represent Kentucky at AFGC

Jay McElwain is owner and operator of Twin Tunnels



Farm in Belton, KY. The 275 acre farming operation consists of 45 acres of leased row crop production, 12 acres of grass / legume hay

production, 75 acres of grass / legume pasture, and a fall calving 26 head Black Angus cow / calf operation. Management practices that have been implemented on the farm include: new electric fencing, rotational grazing, stockpiling / strip grazing of tall fescue, soil testing and fertility management, installed automatic waterers, creek bank preservation / dedicated crossing, as well as several others.

All hay needs are produced on the 12 acre hayfield. McElwain is also a full-time agriculture teacher at Muhlenberg County High School, serves as Count President of the Muhlenberg County Farm Bureau, and is married to his wife of 20 years, Jenny, and has two children, Jackson and Jordan. Jay won the Kentucky Forage Spokesperson contest at the KFGC Field Day on Sept. 24. Jay will represent Kentucky at the National Forage Spokesperson Contest at the American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Conference in Baton Rouge, LA, Jan. 10-13. More info about the AFGC conference can be found at [www.afgc.org](http://www.afgc.org).

### Heart of America Grazing Conference Registration Open

The 2016 Heart of America Grazing Conference will be held in Lexington, KY on January 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> at the Downtown Hilton. Monday evening will include KFGC Board Meeting, Banquet and presentations: History of Forage Research, Extension and Teaching (Dr. Ray Smith) and Gratitude: A Personal Perspective (Dr. Garry Lacefield). Tuesday's program is a full day of lectures around 3 areas: Curing Fescue Toxicosis, Alfalfa Mini-Symposia and Extending the Grazing Season.

Registration before Jan. 13 is \$85 for the full conference; one day and student registrations are also available. Online registration is available at [www.uky.edu/ag/forages](http://www.uky.edu/ag/forages). Exhibit space is still available, contact Krista Lea at [ukforageextension@uky.edu](mailto:ukforageextension@uky.edu) for exhibitor information.

### AFGC Annual Meeting Agenda Available

- The 2016 AFGC Annual Meeting will be held January 10-13, 2016 (Sun-Wed) in Baton Rouge, LA. Details include:
- Sun. Farm Tour sponsored by LFGC
  - Mon. Exhibits, Silent Auction, Photo Contest and Posters  
Opening Session and Breakfast with Teddy Gentry  
Full day of Education sessions  
Forage Spokesperson Competition
  - Tues. Exhibits, Silent Auction, Photo Contest and Posters  
National Forage Bowl Competition  
Full day of educational sessions  
Emerging Scientist Competition  
Hot Topics Session and AFGC Awards Banquet
  - Wed. AFGC Board Meeting

The full agenda as well as registration and accommodations information can be found online at [www.afgc.org](http://www.afgc.org).

### Upcoming Events (full details at UK Forage Website – [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage))

- NOV 20-24 International Grassland Congress. New Delhi, India.
- DEC 4 Farm Bureau Forage Meeting. Louisville, KY
- DEC 13-16 National Grazing Lands Coalition Conf. (GLCI). Grapevine, TX.

### 2016

- JAN 10-12 American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Meeting. Baton Rouge, LA.
- JAN 16 Forages at KCA. Owensboro, KY
- JAN 25-26 Heart of America Grazing Conf. Lexington, KY
- JAN 29-30 UK Equine Showcase and Kentucky Breeders' Short Course. Lexington, KY
- FEB 6 Kentucky Small Ruminant Grazing Conf. Catlettsburg, KY
- FEB 11 Pastures Please Equine Conf., Versailles, KY