



Forage News

Keeping Forage-Livestock Producers in Kentucky Informed

Dr. Ray Smith and Krista Lea, editors

February 2019

Alfalfa: An Important Part of Agriculture's Future

One of buzzwords around agriculture in recent years has been “sustainability” – what can farmers do to make their operations more sustainable for the future. Many are looking to incorporate cover crops, change up their continuous cropping rotations, or even add livestock where they previously were not used before. But one thing that is often overlooked is the benefit of adding a crop like alfalfa, and how it can improve your on-farm sustainability.

Alfalfa's impact on soil health has been widely studied for many years. Because it is a perennial, fields will require less tillage throughout the stand lifetime, similar to perennial pastures. This decreased tillage often improves soil aggregation and organic matter content. Recent research has found that when alfalfa is included in a short-term rotation with corn and soybeans, the amount of carbon sequestered in the soil significantly increases over a continuous corn and soybean rotation. This increase in soil carbon means that soils can become more resilient to harsh environmental stresses.

Overall, alfalfa has a lot to offer agriculture. It is a great source of nutrition for livestock and provides many soil benefits that we are just beginning to fully understand. Its perennial growth habit helps provide protection to soils as well as beneficial insects and wildlife, and makes fields more resilient to environmental stresses. Including alfalfa in your cropping rotations makes sense for many reasons. ~ Excerpt from: Emily Meccage, PhD, Forage Genetics International. NAFA News Release Nov. 2019



Kentucky Alfalfa and Stored Forages Conference - Elizabethtown, KY 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 Alfalfa & Grass Diseases
- Updates on an Online Alfalfa Management Tool
- What's New in Alfalfa Weed Control

- Advances in Hay Mechanization
 - Making a Profit with a Cash Hay Operation
- Early registration is just \$30. Find the full agenda or register at forages.ca.uky.edu/events. For paper registration, mail a check with your name and address to: Ray Smith, N-222E Ag. Science Center North, Univ. of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546-0091.

Strategically Managing Tall Fescue

Tall fescue is the most important cool-season grass in Kentucky. In most unimproved pastures, tall fescue is infected with a fungal endophyte that imparts tolerance to grazing and environmental stresses. The endophyte improves persistence in low input grazing systems, but it also results in the production of alkaloids that cause tall fescue toxicosis. Worse case symptoms include: fescue foot, fat necrosis, and loss of ear tips and tail switches. However, the symptoms that are not readily observed are often the costliest. These include vasoconstriction, elevated body temperature, lower forage intake, lower milk production, lower growth rates and weaning weights, compromised immune system, and lower conception/calving rates. Strategically manage tall fescue by:

- Replacing of Toxic Stands
- Managing Existing Tall Fescue Stands
- Dilution with other forages
- Clipping seedheads
- Strategic avoidance
- Using local animal genetics
- Supplement tall fescue pastures

While management strategies can mitigate impacts, the only way to completely eliminate the harmful effects of endophyte on livestock is to replace infected stands with other forages or novel endophyte tall fescue. ~ Dr. Chris Teutsch, Cow Country News.

Forage Timely Tips: February

- ✓ Continue grazing stockpiled tall fescue if available.
- ✓ Assess grass stands. If thin, consider frost seeding clover (6-8 lb/A red + 1-2 lb/A ladino white clover).
- ✓ On pastures with lower fertility, consider adding 10-15 lb/A annual lespedeza with the clover seed.
- ✓ Consider applying nitrogen at first green-up to promote early growth.
- ✓ Sign up for shared use drills for spring renovation.
- ✓ Service and calibrate no-till drills.
- ✓ Apply lime and fertilizer according to soil test.

Novel Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop back in Lexington, March 19

Toxic tall fescue reduces livestock weight gains and lowers reproductive performance. This one day workshop will give you the tools and information needed to improve your management of toxic tall fescue or to remove it and replace it with novel endophyte varieties. Speakers include local producers, company representatives and extension specialists from across the country. Topics include: Fescue toxicosis, Economics, Testing, Establishment, Management, Products, and Incentives. Registration includes all materials, refreshments, and lunch. Early registration ends March 11th. Space is limited. Register today at <http://TallFescueKY2020.eventbrite.com> or email us at ukforageextension@uky.edu.

The late Ms. Ghanimat Azhdari

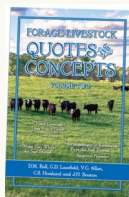
The Secretariat of the National Organizing Committee for the Joint International Grassland/Rangeland Congress, convey deepest condolences on the death of one of the Keynote Speakers, **Ms. Ghanimat Azhdari**, in the recent plane crash near Tehran, Iran.

Ms. Ghanimat worked for *Centre for Sustainable Development and Environment (Cenesta)*. She was an inspiring, intelligent young scientist who was very passionate about indigenous peoples issues and the environment. Ms. Ghanimat Azhdari had agreed to give a Keynote presentation on '*Pastoralism, Social, Gender and Policy Issues*' during the up-coming October 2020 Congress. Read more about the life and work of Ms. Azhdari at <https://tinyurl.com/wg84oz8>.



Quote of the Month: "Where There Is No Vision, There Is No Hope" ~ George Washington Carver

Genuine vision of a better future is essential in creating a better life. There are costs involved, and one must be willing to bear those costs. Too many people give up, submitting to a life of drudgery. This includes some forage-livestock producers, who muddle along, with no vision to see how new inputs and better management could result in more efficient operation and greater profitability. Lack of vision prevents moving to higher levels of forage-livestock productivity. Order your copy of *Forage-Livestock Quote and Concepts*, vol. 2, today at <https://forages.ca.uky.edu/content/forage-books>



AFGC Annual Conference Summary

Kentucky had a large delegation at the American Forage and Grassland Council's annual conference. This year's event was held January 5-8 in Greenville, SC. Jessamine county Ag. Extension agent Steve Musen (pictured) presented a poster on "Effectively Reaching the Equine Community". Grad student Kelly Mercier presented her thesis work on "The Opportunities and Challenges of Grazing Summer Annual Forage Mixtures". Will Bowling representing KFGC in the Forage Spokesperson competition and

won second prize. UK also had a team of undergraduates who competed in the National Forage Bowl Competition. Next year's conference will be held January 3-6, 2021 in Savannah, GA. See page 3 for photos from AFGC.

USDA Hay Markets—January 21, 2020

Below are examples of grass prices being paid FOB barn/stack (except for those noted as delivered, which is indicated by a "d" in the table below) for selected states at the end of the day on Friday, January 17. Large ranges for a particular grade and state are often indicative of location and/or bale size. Also check the USDA Hay Market Prices for additional locations and more detailed information.

Grass hay prices reported to USDA from selected states.			
Location	Forage Quality Grade		
	Premium	Good	Fair
-----\$ per ton-----			
Alabama	100-300	75-90	N/A
California	N/A	N/A	N/A
Colorado	180-315	160	N/A
Idaho	N/A	163	124
Iowa	175-180	125-145	93-125
Kansas	140-155	80-150	75-85
Minnesota	155-210	95-170	80-160
Missouri	N/A	80-120	50-60
Montana	125-270	85-180	75-125
Nebraska	120-180	90-100	N/A
Oregon	205-285	155-230	N/A
Pennsylvania	280-410	175-350	140-275
South Dakota	160	108-140	85-120
Texas	140-330	120-260	100-160

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

A simple but effective method to renovate pastures is to broadcast the legume seed (clover and annual lespedeza) on the soil surface in late winter (ideally February) or when there are 4 to 6 weeks of potential frost at night. As the soil freezes and thaws, the seeds become covered. This method does not work as well with alfalfa or grasses. As described above, make sure the stand is grazed or cut closely so that nearly all plant residue is removed and the legume seed hits the soil surface. To read this and other publications, visit the UK Forage Extension Publication page (forages.ca.uky.edu/pubs).

Upcoming Events

(see website for details and online registration)

FEB 20 - Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference, Elizabethtown, KY

MAR 18 - Novel Tall Fescue Workshop, Spring Hill, TN

MAR 19 - Novel Tall Fescue Workshop, Lexington, KY

APR 14 - Fencing School, Glasgow, KY

APR 16 - Fencing School, Grand Rivers, KY

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

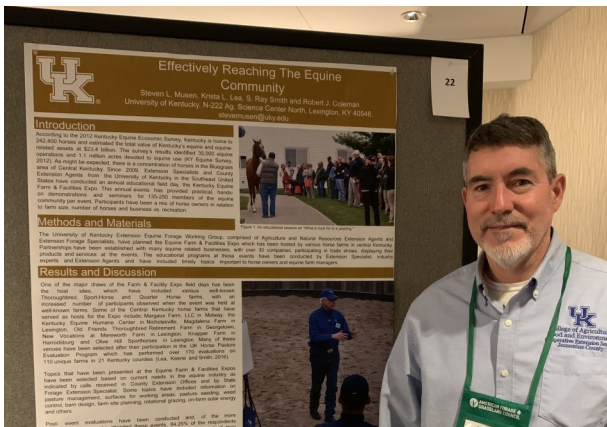
APR 28-30 - So. Pasture Forage Crop Imp. Conf., Montgomery, AL

MAY 19 - Small Ruminant Fencing School, Frankfort, KY

MAY 21 - Fencing School, Campton, KY

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see blue.



Jessamine county ANR agent Steve Musen presents a poster on Equine Outreach



Tom Keene (center) accepts the Distinguished Grasslander Award



Kentuckian Will Bowling (right) wins 2nd Place in the Forage Spokesperson Contest



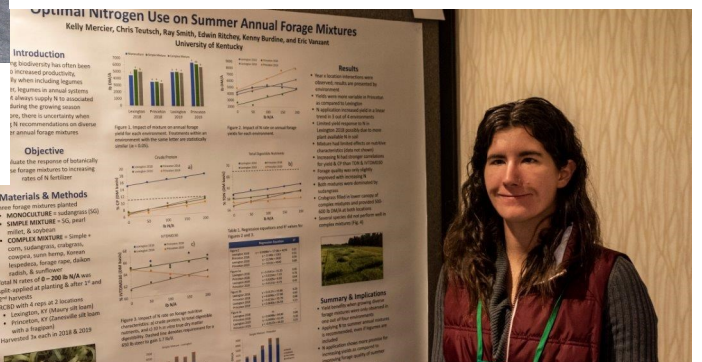
UK Forage Bowl student Alex Teutsch in the plant ID competition



UK Forage Bowl student Nat Colten in the plant ID Competition



(L to R) Steve Musen, Greg Halich, and Will Bowling



UK grad student Kelly Mercier with her poster on annual forages



UK Forage Bowl Team (L to R) : Eric Luteyn, Alex Teutsch, Hannah White, and Nat Colten



(L to R) Dennis Hancock (GA), Scott Flynn (Corteva), Garry Lacefield (KY), John Jennings (AR), and Gary Bates (TN) discuss "Getting Back to Basics"