



Forage News

Keeping Forage-Livestock Producers in Kentucky Informed

Dr. Ray Smith and Echo Gotsick, editors

February 2025

Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference—Feb. 25th

The 2025 Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference will be held Feb. 25 from 8:00 to 3:30 at the Fayette County Extension office, 1140 Harry Sykes Way, Lexington, KY. The conference will provide important updates on alfalfa production and feature how to produce grass hay for premium markets. Speakers will include long-time alfalfa breeder Dr. Don Miller from Idaho. Don Dr. Miller has developed or co-developed 100 alfalfa varieties, 6 red clover and one teff grass variety during his plant breeding career. Specific presentations will include: Everything I Ever Needed to Know about Armyworms, Armyworm Control Methods: What to spray and when, What's New in Alfalfa Varieties, What do Horse Owners Want and Why, What We Can Learn from the Results of the KY Hay Contests, Emerging Markets for Unique Forage Species, and a Producer Panel. The panel will feature four top KY hay producers discussing Orchardgrass, Timothy, Teff, and Fescue/mixed hay production. We have asked them to be very practical and explain their successful methods for establishment, fertilizing, harvesting and marketing. And then we will open the floor to questions. The cost is \$45 and students are only \$15. Go to the UK Forage Website under events (<https://forages.ca.uky.edu/events>) for more details and to register or mail a check with your name to Krista Lea, N222 Agriculture North, Univ. of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546-0091.

Join/ Renew KFGC Membership

We encourage you to show your support for Forage/Livestock agriculture in Kentucky and join the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council. A bonus to joining KFGC is an automatic membership to the American Forage and Grassland Council. A great two for one value for only \$25. If you are already a KFGC member, then I encourage you to renew your membership today. The easiest way is to go to AFGC.org, then click on Membership and Join/Renew Now. Make sure you join as an Affiliate Member of Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council. If you want to mail in your membership then write a check payable to KFGC for \$25 and mail to our KFGC Treasurer: Caroline Roper, UKREC, PO Box 469, Princeton, KY 42445. Make sure to include your name, address, phone, and email with your check.

Forage Timely Tips: February

- ✓ Remove animals from waterlogged pastures to limit pugging and soil compaction.
- ✓ Continue grazing stockpiled tall fescue if available.
- ✓ Assess grass stands. If thin, consider frost seeding legumes.
- ✓ Begin frost seeding with at least 6-8 lb/A red and 1 -2 lb/A ladino 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 N at 40 lb/A in mid to late February on some pastures to promote early growth (not on frost seeded pastures).
- ✓ Sign up for shared use drills for spring renovation.
- ✓ Apply lime and fertilizer according to soil test if not done in fall.
- ✓ Control problem weeds like buttercup in late February when day temperatures are forecast above 50 degrees for 3 consecutive days.

Pub of the Month: Frost Seeding

Now is the time of the year to frost seed red and white clover. Dr. Teutsch recently updated our frost seeding publication and added some information about including annual lespedeza if you have low fertility or droughty soils. The direct link for the publication is below or you can go to the UK Forage Website (google KY Forages) under the Establishment tab. There are many other useful publications on establishment methods on this site.

<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/AGR/AGR271/AGR271.pdf>

Upcoming Pastures Please! For Horse Owners

The 18th annual Pastures Please!! Program will be held on Thursday, Feb. 27 at the Fayette County Extension Office from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. ET. The event is free and open to the public. This year's event continues the tradition of focusing on best management practices for pastures and forages, helping equine operations remain profitable and sustainable. The evening begins with a complimentary meal at 5:30 p.m.

Brett Reese will open the program by exploring the feasibility and benefits of using drone technology for pasture management. "The opportunity to discuss drone technology with an agricultural application is very timely," Coleman said. "The technology exists, but understanding where and how to use it is important." Following that session, Bill Witt will discuss common and emerging weeds that can compromise pasture quality and equine health. Krista Lea will then highlight the available cost-share opportunities to help horse owners invest in improving their pastures. RSVPs are encouraged. Please call 859-257-5582 to reserve a spot or learn more about additional extension educational opportunities. The Fayette County extension office is located at 1140 Harry Sykes Way, Lexington, KY 40504. ~Jordon Strickler, UK Ag. Comm.

USDA Hay Production Update

The USDA, NASS Annual Crop Production report released January 10th. This document includes acreage, yield, production, and stocks data for Kentucky hay, with historical comparisons.

Report highlights;

- Farmers harvested 5,000,000 tons of dry alfalfa and other hay in 2024, up 13% from 2023.
- Yields for other hay increased 12% to 2.35 tons/acre, while the alfalfa yield remained unchanged at 3.0 tons/acre.
- Alfalfa hay production was 300,000 tons, up 11% from last year.
- Other hay production was 5,000,000 tons, up 13% from 2023.
- Farmers reported 3,650,000 tons of hay in storage December 1. This is a 22\$ increase from a year earlier.
- Full Crop Production report on www.nass.usda.gov

NAFA's DC Fly-In Next Week

The National Alfalfa and Forage Alliance's 15th Annual D.C. Fly-In is February 3-6. This event has been very successful in garnering recognition and research funding for our industry. Due to this exposure, the Alfalfa Seed and Alfalfa Forage Systems Research Program (ASAFS) has received nearly \$30 million in funding since 2014. In addition to meeting with members of the House and Senate Ag and Ag Appropriations Committees, NAFA will also be securing meetings with agency personnel, such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), and Risk Management Agency (RMA). Dr. Ray Smith will represent KFGC at this year's event and will report on the success of the trip at the upcoming Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference Feb. 27.

American Forage and Grassland Council Awards 2025

Jason Thompson won the National Forage Spokesperson contest at the recent American Forage and Grassland Congress. Congrats

Jason! His winning presentation about the forage and grazing improvements on his farm was also given at the Forages at KCA event in Owensboro Jan. 17. As with all of our statewide meetings, Dr. Teutsch recorded it. Go to KY Forages Youtube to listen to Jason's presentation.

Dr. Brittany Davis from the USDA-ARS lab in Lexington won the AFGC Early Career Award. Brittany's research program utilizes a multidisciplinary approach to evaluate grazing animals, intestinal microbiology, and plant based beneficial phytochemicals in cattle, small ruminant, and horses. For example, she has conducted research on how to practically supplement rations with red clover to alleviate fescue toxicosis and increase gain. Dr. Davis has authored 39 journal articles, 53 proceedings/abstracts, 10 magazine articles, and 27 invited talks.

The UK Team of Whitney Peck (pictured, bottom left) and Lauren Hall (bottom right) won the first round of the National Forage Bowl Competition at AFGC. Congrats Lauren and Whitney, you represented KY well! And special thanks to UK graduate student Jonathan Stephens (top) for coaching the team. KFGC supported travel for these students through proceeds from the silent auction at the annual KY Grazing and Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conferences. Student teams from any KY University are eligible for these KFGC travel funds.

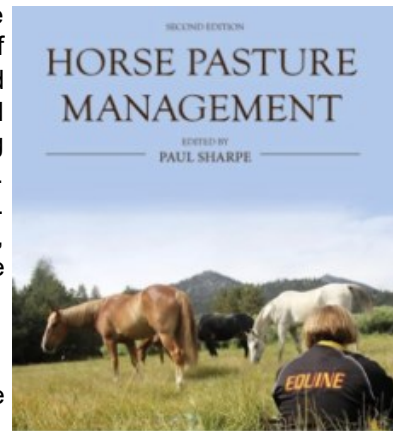


New Horse Pasture Management Book

The newly revised Horse Pasture Management, 2nd Edition by Paul Sharpe provides updated coverage on strategies for managing behavior,

see blue.

grouping, environments and feeding needs of grazing horses. Sections cover the structure, function and identification of forages, continuing into nutritional value of pasture plants. Management of soil, the function of a pasture ecosystem and management of plants in a pasture is covered next, followed by forage yield determination, horse grazing behavior, feed choices of horses, management of grazing horses, and how to calculate how many horses should be grazing relative to land size. UK faculty and research specialists contributed 5 chapters to this book including Dr. Bob Coleman, Dr. Laurie Lawrence, Dr. Ray Smith, Dr. Jimmy Henning, Krista Lea, and Tom Keene. It's available on Amazon in both print and Kindle formats. Make sure to choose the 2nd edition since it contains twice the information as the 1st edition.



Technology is only as good as the Grazing Manager

Graziers who use virtual fence technology tell us that it's just like any other tool we use to manage our operations. It still requires the basic skills of a successful grazer. You still need to set goals and monitor your pastures. You still need to be patient, persistent and above all, adaptive. And when things seem tough, remember to enjoy the little things. Listen to these graziers talk about how they did all that in this 10:22 video. Then read on for some tips on how to do each of these things, whether you're trying something new, or just going about your daily work. Quotes from some of the speakers on the video. "Virtual fence technology is not going to take the role of a rangeland manager." (David Bohnert) "Using these technologies, that doesn't take the animal husbandry out of it. That doesn't take the ranch management out of it. It's a tool." (Andrew Cox) "Virtual fence is only as good as the manager." (Pat Luark)

View this Episodes 1-4 at the OnPasture website: Virtual Fencing – the Next Big Thing in Grazing. Also available are 1000's of practical articles and summaries of research on pasture management and grazing systems. ~Kathy Voth, editor of On Pasture. <https://onpasture.com/>



Virtual Fencing - Setup for Success - Part 2 - Getting Started

2025 AFGC Photos



2025 Kentucky American Forage and Grassland Group in Orlando, Florida



2025 AFGC Forage Spokesperson winner Jason Thompson (left) and UK's Chris Teutsch (right)

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Forage News



Martin-Gatton
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
University of Kentucky.

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

Feb. 25 - Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference, Lexington, KY

Feb. 27—Pastures Please! Equine Conf. Lexington, KY

Mar. 6 - Tall Fescue Workshop, Leitchfield, KY

April 29-30—KY Beginning Grazing School. Logan County

May 21-23— Southern Pasture Conf. Corpus Cristi, TX

Sept. 24-25— Intermediate Grazing School, Versailles

October— KY Grazing Conference

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www.forages.ca.uky.edu.