

# UK Forage News

## Keeping Forage-Livestock Producers in Kentucky Informed

Dr. Ray Smith and Echo Gotsick, editors

January 2025

### Introducing Forage News Co- Editor, Echo Gotsick

First, we would like to thank Krista Lea for her almost 10 years of service as co-editor of Forage News! She has handed off her position to Research Technician, Echo Gotsick. Echo is a former graduate student turned research technician here in the plant and soil sciences department at UK. Throughout her time at UK she studied different techniques of analyzing pasture botanical compositions and tracked changes in pasture systems throughout seasons and years.

### Join/ Renew KFGC Membership

I 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.

### 2025 KY Grazing Calendar Now Available

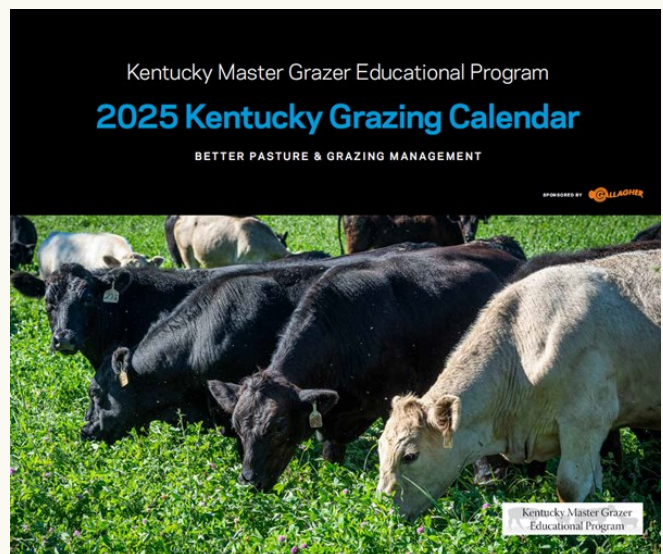
The 2025 Kentucky Grazing Calendars are now available. Not only is there a calendar, but beautiful forage and livestock photos from our own Dr. Jimmy Henning. In addition, we have included timely tips for things you should be doing on your farm each month of the year. Pick up your free copy from the KFGC booth at the KY Cattlemen's Annual Conference in Owensboro in two weeks, or grab a copy at most KY county extension offices. We will also be able to mail copies on a first come/first serve basis. Email your request to me with your full mailing address: raysmith1@uky.edu. We gratefully acknowledge the support of Gallagher Fencing and the KY Master Grazer program to develop and print these calendars.

### Tall Fescue Workshops

Several excellent tall fescue workshops have been organized by the Alliance for Grassland Renewal and will be available in coming weeks. The first one is an online event Thursday evening Jan. 23 from 7-10EST. This

### Forage Timely Tips: January

- ✓ Continue strip-grazing of stockpiled tall fescue for maximum utilization.
- ✓ Remove animals from waterlogged pastures to limit pugging and soil compaction.
- ✓ Feed best hay to animals with highest nutritional needs.
- ✓ Supplement poor quality hay as indicated by forage testing.
- ✓ Feed hay in poor pastures to increase soil fertility and enhance organic matter.
- ✓ Consider 'bale grazing' - set out hat throughout field when the ground is dry or frozen. Then use temporary fencing to allocate bales as needed after that.
- ✓ Use variety trial results to select seed for spring renovation
- ✓ Prepare for pasture renovation by purchasing seeds, inoculant, etc. and getting equipment ready.



Novel Endophyte Renovation Workshop is free and will provide practical recommendations on managing existing tall fescue stands and considerations for renovating stands with improved varieties. The second workshop is Equine focused and will be held in Lexington from 10-2:30 Jan. 29 (at the extension office). Entitled "Equines and Endophytes Workshop" the meeting is designed for

horse owners, breeders and managers to determine the risk of fescue for their horses and management steps to alleviate the risk. The cost is \$40. The third workshop is an all-day event designed for cattle and small ruminant producers on March 6 from 8 to 5:00 at the Grayson County extension office in Leitchfield, KY. Registration is only \$40 and the event will feature comprehensive management strategies to get the most from your existing fescue stands and to determine if your pastures and hayfields should be renovated. Go to the Grassland Renewal website under events for more information and to register. <https://grasslandrenewal.org/events/>

### **Grazing Calendar Dedication to Bob Hall**

We are pleased to announce that the 2025 KY Grazing Calendar is dedicated to Mr. Robert (Bobby) Hall Jr. A sixth-generation Kentucky farmer, Bobby ran a purebred Suffolk sheep operation for many years, and now custom grazes cattle on high quality pasture on his Scott County farm.

After graduating from the UK in 1953, Bobby managed purebred Angus herds in Bloomfield, KY, and Dutchess County, NY. He served in the army as a veterinary food inspector from 1955-1957. Returning to Lexington, he accepted the position of Beef Cattle Herdsman at the University of Kentucky, under Dr. W.P. Garrigus, from 1958-1964. In 1964 he purchased a livestock feed mill in Lexington which ultimately became Hallway Feeds. The mill became the only family owned, equine focused feed manufacturer in the country, supplying successful thoroughbred breeders and trainers, as well preeminent horses in competitive English and Western disciplines in the United States and abroad.

Bobby was intimately involved in bringing the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) from Chicago to Louisville, starting with the sheep show. He served on the NAILE executive committee from 1975-2012. He has received numerous honors, including being the first inductee into the University of Kentucky Animal Sciences Hall of Fame (1987), the Harold Workman Distinguished Service to Agriculture Award (2014), and the UK College of Agriculture Distinguished Alumni Award (2016). In 2024, Bobby received the Grassroots Award from the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council, our highest recognition for forage producers in Kentucky. He was also recently inducted into the 2025 University of Kentucky Hall of Distinguished Alumni. Even with all the accolades that he's received over the years, what drives Bobby most of all is his commitment to family and a desire to see others succeed.

The editors of the 2025 Kentucky Grazing Calendar are indebted to Bobby Hall for his untiring and enthusiastic support for forages, rotational grazing, and the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council. His leadership in the forage/livestock industry reaches across Kentucky and literally around the world.

### **Forages at KCA– Jan. 17th**

If you are attending the KY Cattleman's Association meeting in January in Owensboro, make sure to attend the Forages at KCA session. It will be held the second afternoon of the meeting, Jan 17 from 2:25 to 4:30. This year's theme is **Matching Animal**



**Genetics to Forage Resources** and will feature two outstanding forage/livestock producers. Dan Glenn will talk about "Optimizing Production with a Forage Focused System" based on his operation in Fitzgerald, GA- Deep Grass Graziers. Dalton Bennett from Knoll Crest Farm in Redhouse, VA will share about "Genetics for Tall Fescue Based Systems." We look forward to seeing many of you there.

### **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.

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## Pub of the Month: Forage Variety Trials for 2024

Most of the 2024 UK Forage Variety Trials reports are now available on the Forages Extension website and the rest will be available by mid-January. Reports cover red and white clover, tall fescue, orchardgrass, alfalfa, summer annual grasses, other forage species and include data on yield, persistence, maturity, seedling vigor and grazing preference. For an overview of the best varieties from 23 years of UK testing look on the last page of each report or go to the 2024 Long-Term Summary of Kentucky Forage Variety Trials at this webpage. [https://forages.ca.uky.edu/variety\\_trials](https://forages.ca.uky.edu/variety_trials)

## Buy Red and White Clover Seed Now

Just as last year, improved varieties of red and white clover are currently in short supply, both in the U.S. and worldwide. This means that if you want to frost seed clover in February you are advised to purchase or line up your seed now. If you wait you may only be able to find unimproved common clover seed that just does not persist well in Kentucky.

## New 2,4 D Tolerant Red Clover

The following information is from a presentation for the upcoming AFGC annual conference entitled: "Developing and Testing 2,4-D Resistant Red Clover". The encouraging thing is that 2,4 D tolerant red clovers are coming on the market. The caution is to make sure you have good information on the variety before you buy seed to make sure it's adapted to KY.

Dr. Norm Taylor initiated a 2,4-D tolerant red clover breeding program over 30 years ago by crossing a known tolerant line from Dr. Ken Quesenberry (UF) with 'Kenland'. Dr. Taylor continued with multiple generations of recurrent selection including 2,4-D applications each cycle. After his death, UK researchers continued with modifications to the original protocol and are now in final stages of testing the most advanced line UK2022. To validate tolerance a trial was planted spring 2023 and sprayed late April 2024 (2nd production yr).

Injury ratings (0-9 scale) two wks post-application at 1lb/A ae were 2.0, 4.0, and 4.5 and at 2lb/A ae 3.5, 5.25, and 6.0 for UK 2022, 'Q Medium Red', and Kenland, respectively. Regrowth injury ratings 7 wks post-application (4 wks after harvest) were 0.0, 0.75, 5.25 at 1lb/A ae and 0.75, 0.75, 6.0 at 2lb/A ae for UK 2022, Q Red, and Kenland. Cumulative forage yield 2024 (3 harvests) for unsprayed checks was 5.1, 4.4, 5.6 tons/A for UK 2022, Q Red, and Kenland. The yield for these entries at 1lb/A ae was 4.6, 3.3, 3.3 and at 2lb/A ae 4.2, 3.0, 2.8 tons/A. Lower yields for Q Red in KY was likely related to it being an early maturing variety and reduced 2nd year persistence.

Graduate student Tara Lewis determined potential mode of tolerance in these breeding lines. Using an earlier 2,4 D tolerant line (UK2014) she showed less parent 2,4-D and more 2,4-D metabolites leaf, shoot and root sections of UK2014 at all sample times (8, 24, 48 and 72 hrs post-treatment) compared to Kenland indicating enhanced 2,4-D metabolism is the likely basis for tolerance. In conclusion, UK 2022 shows promise for low-rate applications of 2,4 D with less injury than the check and much better recovery. Further testing to validate 2,4 D tolerance in UK 2022 is planned for 2025 before a potential variety release. ~Ray Smith, Gene Olson, Sara Carter, Lucas Araújo, Tara Lewis, Michael Barrett, and Gabriel Roberts

## Know your Winter Weeds and How to Control Them

Dr. Jimmy Henning wrote an excellent article on winter weeds for the December 5 issue of Farmer's Pride. He included excellent seedling photos of these weeds and we wanted to include an excerpt of his article in this issue of Forage News.

Winter weeds are a common problem in Kentucky pastures. Most do not realize that these weeds are often up and growing now. These plants can be very competitive with our perennial cool season grasses, especially in new seedings. These weeds can be recognized easily. This article will focus on five very common winter weeds of pasture: buttercup, common chickweed, henbit, purple deadnettle and poison hemlock.

### Weed Identification

**Buttercup** is the common name for several *Ranunculus* species that are short-lived perennials. Most often, we are not aware of buttercup until its yellow flowers appear. Once you see the yellow flowers, buttercup will produce seed. Right now, buttercup is present in pastures as individual or clumps of plants (Fig. 1). Leaves are shiny and lobed. Buttercup can be toxic to livestock. The risk for toxic effects are low since buttercups are not palatable and grazing animals rarely consume them if other forage is available. The toxin is found in the leaves and stems, and flowering plants contain more of the toxin than younger plants. The drying process in haymaking eliminates the toxic agent. Mowing is usually ineffective for controlling buttercups; however, buttercups are easily controlled with several herbicides.



Figure 1.

**Common chickweed** (*Stellaria media*) is a winter annual with smooth, oval-shaped leaves with pointed tips that grow opposite each other (Fig. 2). Common chickweed typically grows close to the ground and often forms a dense mat.

**Henbit** and **purple deadnettle** are winter annual species of the same genus (*Lamium*) and are frequently confused with each other. Henbit leaves (Fig. 3) are more lobed than deadnettle, which tend to look heart shaped (Fig. 4). Henbit flowers are pink to red and occur in clusters in the upper leaf stalks. Purple deadnettle flowers occur near the tops of the plant and are less purple than henbit flowers. The most striking difference is that the purple deadnettle's upper leaves and stems are very red in appearance compared to henbit.

**Poison hemlock** is a toxic plant actively growing now in many pastures (Fig. 5). Hemlock is aggressive and can overtake areas if uncontrolled. Although not usually grazed, poison hemlock can be poisonous to livestock, particularly when other forages are limited or when present in large quantities in hay. Cattle, goats and horses are considered to be most susceptible to toxicity. In addition, poison hemlock can crowd out desirable plants in areas where it becomes established.



Figure 2.



Figure 3.



Figure 4.



Figure 5.

### Control Options

The UK publication 'Broadleaf weeds of Kentucky pastures' (AGR-207) is one of the best places to start in developing a control strategy. This simple two-page publication is available at your local extension offices or download the full color version at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/AGR/AGR207/AGR207.pdf> . To utilize the herbicide table, locate the weed to be controlled, note the time(s) of most effective control and find the herbicide choice(s) that give good control.

All of the weeds in this article are poorly managed by mowing, but many herbicide choices are available. February and March are good times for chemical control, but herbicides need two or three days of 50° F daytime temps after spraying for best results. To make sure you can take advantage of a possible spraying opportunity, purchase your desired product now and make sure spraying equipment is working and calibrated. As with any herbicide, always read and follow label instructions.

Right now, winter pasture weeds are present but are small and sometimes overlooked. Weeds like those in this article can be identified with a little practice. Early identification along with timely herbicide application can give you a head start on cleaner spring pastures.

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# Forage News



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

- Jan. 12-14, 2025-** AFGC Conference, Orlando, FL
- Jan. 17 -** Forages at KCA, Owensboro, KY
- Jan. 23 -** Novel Endophyte Renovation Workshop, Lexington, KY
- Jan. 29—** Equines and Endophyte Workshop, Lexington, KY
- Feb. 25 -** Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference, Lexington, KY
- Mar. 6 -** Tall Fescue Workshop, Leitchfield, KY
- April 29-30—**KY Beginning Grazing School. Logan County
- Sept. 24-25—** Intermediate Grazing School, Versailles

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