



Forage News

Keeping Forage-Livestock Producers in Kentucky Informed

Dr. Ray Smith and Echo Gotsick, editors

July 2025

University of Kentucky Research and Education Center Celebrates 100 years of Better Pastures

Make sure to attend the UK Research and Education Center at Princeton's field day July 22. The Corn, Soybean and Tobacco Field Day will be held on Tuesday morning starting at 8:00 and the Beef and Forage Field Day will run from 1:30-4:00. Both groups will gather for a shared lunch starting at 12:00 CDT. Address is: 348 University Dr, Princeton, KY 42445

Improving forage crops for higher-producing grazing livestock was a primary goal of the University of Kentucky's agricultural station in Princeton when it opened in 1925. One hundred years later, the Research and Education Center, as part of the University of Kentucky Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment and the Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station, reflects on its many contributions to farmer success.

"Forage crops are an integral part of Kentucky agriculture, underpinning the success of beef, small ruminant and equine farms," said Chad Lee, director of the Grain and Forage Center of Excellence stationed at the Research and Education Center (UKREC). "Forage research and recommendations from state extension specialists and county agents across the state have helped farmers evaluate and implement new grazing systems to optimize forage utilization, soil improvement and animal performance."

UKREC faculty and staff, alongside those at the Lexington campus, have conducted a century of extensive research on the production and management of pasture crops and cut forages. Equally important are the educational outreach programs that share newfound knowledge with the farming community. Many of those are held in Princeton to serve Western Kentucky. ~Jennifer Elwell, for the full article go to <https://news.ca.uky.edu/article/100-years-better-pastures-kentucky>

Pub of the Month- Tall Fescue Novel Endophyte Varieties and Establishment for Livestock and Horse Farms AGR-275.

This publication outlines the value of novel endophyte tall fescue and provides an overview of the currently available varieties. Most importantly it provides clear guidelines for converting pastures from toxic to novel endophyte tall fescue during each season of the year. These basic guidelines are listed below.

Forage Timely Tips: July

- ✓ Make plans to attend summer field days.
- ✓ Clip Pastures to remove weed seeds and release vegetative growth
- ✓ Slow rotational grazing to allow a longer recovery period
- ✓ Begin making plans for which pasture to stockpile for winter grazing
- ✓ Begin making plans for pastures and hayfields that need overseeding/reseeding in September

Spring – Soil sample and remove/prevent tall fescue seedheads. Take a soil sample in May or earlier. Follow lime and fertilizer recommendations from the soil test report. Mow the pasture closely in early May as soon as seedheads begin to elongate. Mow again in late May to remove any seedheads that escaped earlier mowing. Timely clipping is important since tall fescue seed can be viable 15-20 days after pollination and then will germinate in the fall, contaminating the new seedlings.

Mid-Late Summer - Apply a broad-spectrum herbicide like glyphosate to kill the existing tall fescue stand before planting novel endophyte tall fescue or other forage grasses. Graze tall fescue heavily during late spring and summer, during periods of growth, stopping to allow regrowth to 4-5 inches in height. Apply glyphosate in mid- to late July. Allow weeds and toxic tall fescue to germinate or regrow. Reapply glyphosate immediately before planting in early to mid-September.

Early Fall - Plant novel endophyte tall fescue seed. Using a no-till drill, plant a novel tall fescue variety by early to mid-September, after the last glyphosate application. Plant 20lb/a at a depth of ¼ to ½ in. To achieve better ground cover, set the drill to deliver 10 lb/a and go over field twice, with the second set of rows perpendicular to the first.

Late Fall and Early the Following Spring - New stand management. Apply 40 lb N/a in late fall and early spring to enhance stand establishment. Herbicides such as 2,4-D can be used to control broadleaf weeds after tall fescue seedlings have reached the 4-leaf stage (4-5 inches tall). Allow the tall fescue to become well

established before grazing the following spring. Wait until plants are 8 inches tall and lightly graze or mow to a residual height of 4-5 in or simply cut for hay in the spring (4 in stubble height). Cool-season grasses require 18 months to become fully established. Light grazing during the first season will allow for the development of a strong sod and dense stand that should last 10 to 15 years or more.

For the entire AGR-275 publication go to the UK Forage Website under "Establishment" or https://forages.ca.uky.edu/files/establishing_novel_endophyte_tall_fescue_agr275.pdf

Reflections from Australia: What we can learn from Australian Producers about being prepared for unpredictable weather

I returned one and a half weeks ago from Australia. I was attending the International Rangeland Congress (IRC) in South Australia and visiting farms and research sites in New South Wales and Queensland. This is my fourth trip "down under" and every time I go I learn so much. I was fortunate to spend a year there with my family back in 1999. One of the things that has always impressed me is the resiliency of Australian livestock producers (and farmers in general). When we think about weather extremes we really have no idea.

For example, what would you do if all your ponds (dams as they call them) were dry and your pastures were grazed to dirt (literally to dirt). That's what I saw when I was in South Australia. The last 23 months have been the driest in history. Even the kangaroos are dying, seriously. Purchased feed was exorbitant and local cattle and sheep prices were dropping. Kangaroo Island is a large island (over 1 million acres) a couple of hours south of Adelaide. It has large agricultural areas and has been forced to allocate expensive drinking water from its desalination plant to cattle and sheep producers (who have to truck it to their farms). This is after devastating fires in early 2020 that burned over half of the island.

And then I traveled to northern NSW and Queensland where they were dealing with excessive rainfall, flooding, and waterlogged soil conditions. In fact, giant Lake Eyre, in the interior of Australia, is nearly full of water and this is only the 3rd time in 160 years this has happened. But this region had its own excessive drought in 2019 when many areas received only 1/3 of their normal rainfall.

I asked our good friend Rob McClenaghan, who runs cattle and merino sheep in northern NSW, about what he does if there's a drought. First of all, he emphasized, "It's not if there is a drought, it's when there's a drought, because we know one is coming. We just don't know if it will start next week, or next month, or next year. We always have to be prepared." When I asked how he prepared for drought he said, "I try to make sure I have some money in the bank and that I always have extra feed." And Rob was not giving a flippant answer. For him, extra feed is making sure he's not overgrazing and on some of his larger pastures, he tries to graze very lightly. In essence, keeping a stockpile of standing forage on hand all the time.

What can we learn from Rob and 1000s of other Australian livestock producers like him? We all know what it means to have money in the bank, but extra feed can mean many things. It may mean that you have more hay storage than you need on an annual basis so you are ready and not forced to buy expensive hay during a drought. It may mean having cash reserves so you can afford to buy commodity feeds during drought and are not forced to go into debt. It may mean that you are willing to cull less productive cows when forage resources are really tight. Rob said he sold most of his cattle herd in 2019 even though he had spent years breeding this herd. This act not only saved him from buying expensive feed, and maybe having to sell anyway, but when he started restocking his cattle herd he realized the genetics he had so meticulously bred were not as good as the genetics he was able to buy.

My main point is to "be prepared." Be prepared for any and every situation. Don't allow weather extremes to surprise you. Be prepared all the time.

If you are interested in a much more comprehensive overview of my recent Australian trip, I'll be giving a slide presentation in a few weeks and I'll let you know when a recording is available on our KYForages YouTube channel.

Alfalfa Pest Management Resources Available through the Crop Protection Network

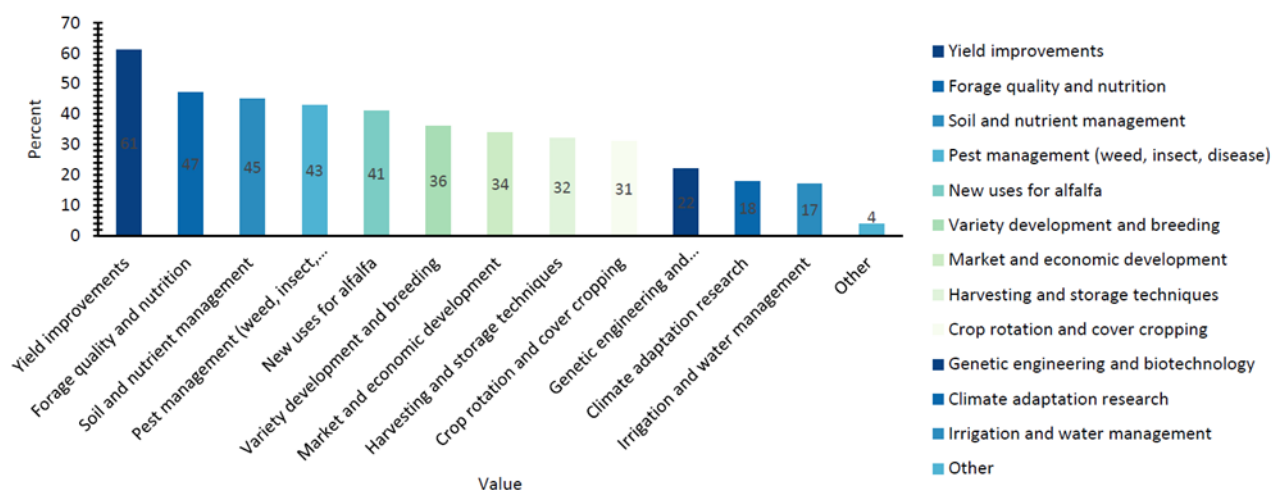
Over 60 publications on alfalfa pest issues are now available through the multi-state research and Extension group the *Crop Protection Network* (CPN). Publications on important alfalfa diseases in Kentucky, such as *Aphanomyces root rot*, as well as publications on alfalfa insects and disorders, and injuries, are available. The annually updated *Fungicide Efficacy for Control of Alfalfa Diseases* is also available to aid with fungicide management decisions in pure stands of alfalfa. These publications are updated frequently and will replace older alfalfa disease Extension publications on the *Plant Pathology Extension Publication page*. Publications are available in mobile-friendly versions on the CPN website. Posted on June 17, 2025, in KY Pest News (go online to sign up for the regular issues)

National Alfalfa Survey Results

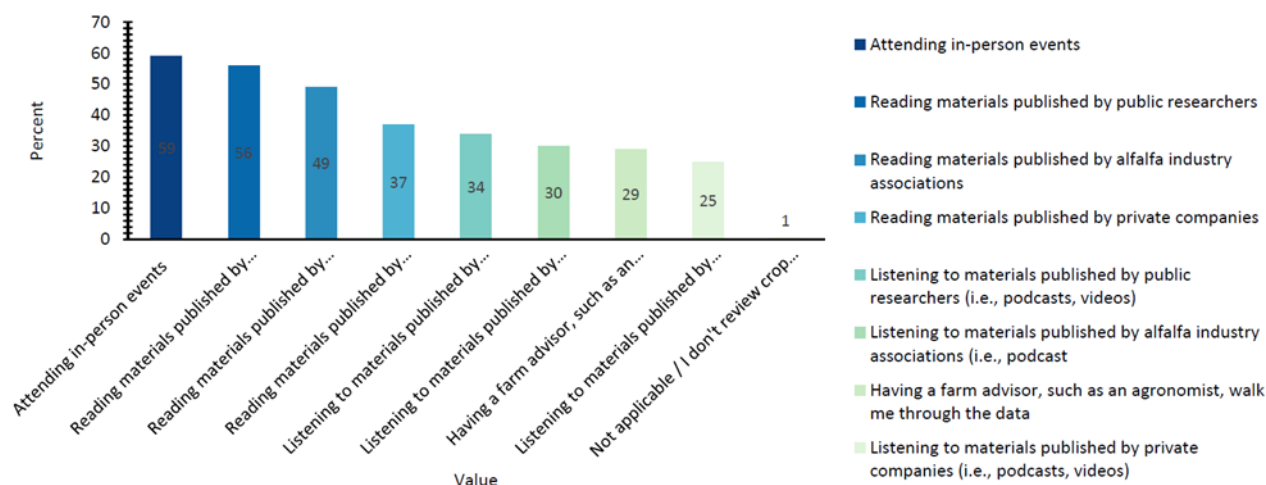
The following graphs show just some of the results from a recent survey by the National Alfalfa and Forage Alliance (NAFA). First of all, thanks to all of you who completed the survey. Although the survey went all over the country, 16% of respondents were from KY. Secondly, the survey results contain a wealth of information. More of this information will be available in the coming months at the NAFA www.alfalfa.org website or in upcoming issues of Hay and Forage Grower magazine. Also, there is a tremendous amount of publications and other resources at <https://www.alfalfa.org/publications.php>

see blue.

15.What research would be most impactful to your alfalfa operation? Select all that apply.



17.When reviewing crop research data, which methods do you prefer? Select all that apply.



Cost Share Field Day—August 9th

Consider attending an upcoming field day Saturday morning Aug. 9 in 2025 in Woodford County. Although the field day will focus on Cost Share Opportunities for horse farms, the information presented will be useful for all livestock operations.

COST SHARE OPPORTUNITIES ON HORSE FARMS

Field day hosted by University of Kentucky Extension and Texata Farms

HIGHLIGHTS

- See conservation practices on a working farm
- On-site cost share applications
- Educational lectures
- Free to attend - breakfast included!

Event Information:
SAT., AUGUST 9, 2025
 From 9 AM - 1 PM
 4665 Troy Pike, Versailles, KY 40383

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

KADF **TEXATA**
 KENTUCKY ALFALFA DEVELOPMENT FARM

RSVP at <https://CostShareEventInfo.com> or scan the QR code

University of Kentucky
Forage Extension Program
N-222 Ag. Science Center North
1100 S. Limestone
Lexington, KY 40546

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)

July 22 - UK Princeton Field Day, Princeton KY

Aug. 9—Cost Share Field Day, Versailles, KY

Sept. 20 - Beef Bash, Versailles, KY

Sept. 24-25—Intermediate Grazing School, Versailles, KY

Oct. 28— KY Grazing Conf. East, Winchester, KY

Oct. 29— KY Grazing Conf. West, Leitchfield, KY

Jan. 11-13, 2026— AFGC Annual Conf., Ashville, NC

Subscribe or access full articles at the UK Forage Website
www.forages.ca.uky.edu.