

# UK Forage News

Heart of America Conference a Success: Watch on KY Forages Youtube  
Dr. Ray Smith and Echo Gotsick, editors

November 2024

## Heart of America Grazing Conference

The Heart of America Grazing Conference was a huge success. Thanks to the support of KFGC and many other organizations we hosted 200 people at the main event at the Hardin County Extension office on Wednesday October 16. On the day before, the hands-on Pasture Ecology workshop at the Pyles farm near E-town was attended by 90 people. And on Oct. 17 over 140 people attended an outstanding pasture walk on Greg Brann's farm near Adolphus, KY. Dr. Teutsch recorded all the sessions on the main day of the conference and they are now on the KY Forages YouTube channel. This includes presentations on soils and soil health by Ray Archuleta and Dr. Alan Franzluebbers, an overview of bale grazing by Dr. Greg Halich, an interesting inside view of the organisms in the soil by Dr. Chris Teutsch, and a summary of how soil health and grazing management work together by Dr. Matt Poore. See the last page of Forage News for photos from these events!

## Top 10 Reasons to Test Hay

Most of you recognize the value of testing hay and make sure your livestock are fed the right hay at the right time. If you don't regularly test hay then the following is a list the top ten reasons you should make the effort to test the hay you produce or the hay you are buying.

**1. It saves feed costs.** Overwintering costs are the single biggest cost in a cow-calf operation. UK budgets place the hay cost of overwintering a cow at \$150 (2.5 tons at \$60 per ton). Since much of the profit in a cow-calf operation comes from saving money, it makes good sense to know what is in your hay and to not purchase nutrients you don't need.

**2. It keeps livestock healthy.** By preventing underfeeding, you keep cows in better condition and they can better handle the disease stresses of winter.

**3. It tells you about your legume content.** The calcium to phosphorous ratio will indicate how much legume is in the hay. If calcium and phosphorous are present in similar amounts (in other words the ratio is 1 to 1), your hay is mostly grass. If it is 2 to 1 or greater, you have a significant amount of legume.

**4. You get more calves.** In other words, skinny cows don't rebreed. Testing hay and feeding accordingly lowers the risk of cows losing significant body condition over winter.

**5. It is a scorecard for your hay program.** Hay quality is something you can do something about but only if you get it tested. Comparing current values to historic values

## Forage Timely Tips: November

- ✓ Apply 30-40 lb N per acre to strengthen cool-season grass sods.
- ✓ Inventory hay and assess hay quality.
- ✓ Using a plate meter or grazing stick, estimate stockpile available for winter grazing.
- ✓ Adjust animal numbers or purchase additional hay to balance forage-feed supply to livestock needs.
- ✓ Graze crop residues and cover crops that will not overwinter. Be careful to avoid fields that contain johnsongrass until after these plants have dried up.
- ✓ Graze winter annuals that will not overwinter such as brassicas and oats.
- ✓ Graze other winter annuals once they are 6-8 inches tall and are well anchored. Do NOT graze closer to 4 inches.
- ✓ Sugar content will rise in tall fescue with the cool temperatures and short days of fall.

for your hay quality will "red flag" production issues before you find out about them in the form of fewer calves or thin cows.

**6. It can make you money.** A hay test can help leverage higher prices for cash sales. Having a hay test says to potential customers that you are a serious forage producer.



**7. It can tell you if your hay got hot.** A hay test can tell you if your hay got hot in storage, if you specify the correct assay when you submit the sample. Commonly used acronyms for heat damaged protein are ADICP, ADF-CP, ADIN, HDP and ICP. All of these represent the same thing – the amount of insoluble nitrogen associated with the acid detergent fiber in forage. All forage will have some insoluble nitrogen in the acid detergent fiber, but if

it is more than 10% of the total, then you have heat damaged protein and you may need supplement.

**8. It helps you use your hay efficiently.** You will be able to feed the best hay to the livestock that need the most nutrition.

**9. It helps diagnose storage problems.** Getting around to all your hay barns and storage locations will give you a chance to make note of any barn leaks, water encroachment from poor drainage, and other problems.

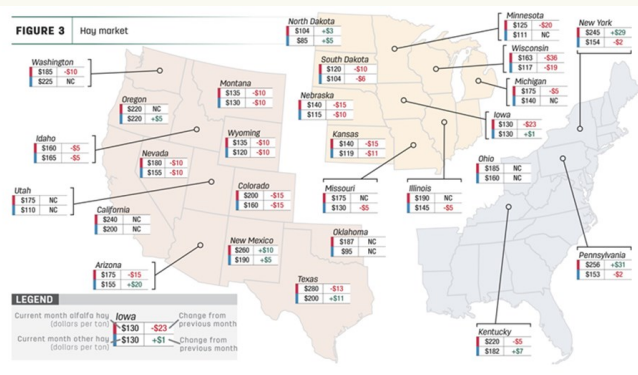
**10. It will impress** (and maybe shock) your county agent, your ag dealer and even your neighbors.

~excerpt from Dr. Jimmy Henning's Forage Doctor column Oct. 17 Farmers Pride. For the full online issue go to [TheFarmersPride.com](http://TheFarmersPride.com)

## Kentucky Hay Summary

Did you know that KY is one of the top hay producing states in the country. Most of what is produced is grass and grass/clover hay and it is fed on-farm, but KY hay producers that are willing to work with our fickle weather are capitalizing on the high value horse hay market. Even with the dry weather this summer in many areas KY producers harvested over 5 million tons of dry hay in 2024. Go to [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov) for the full data set on KY Hay and Crop production.

Although Progressive Forage does not publish current hay values for KY, the numbers from nearby states (below) provide an indication of what livestock producers



are paying right now. With the dry weather in KY and even dryer weather in surrounding states, hay prices are expected to increase over the late fall and winter. Go to [www.agproud.com/topics/102-progressive-forage](http://www.agproud.com/topics/102-progressive-forage) for more information on summarized hay values.

## Tall fescue active after recent rains

Tall fescue has responded to the hurricane rains in late September with tremendous vigor, and in some cases, high ergovaline levels that cause fescue toxicity have also been observed in Central KY over the past 3 weeks. This fall peak is similar to what was observed in 2022 and 2023 across the southeastern US, which also experienced dry falls followed by significant rainfall.

Cow calf producers (especially those fall calving) should keep a close eye on your cows since high ergovaline can lead to low milk production and make rebreeding more difficult. Managers of **see blue.** from many states as well as extension agents.

pregnant mares should consider testing pastures (at the UK Vet Diagnostic Lab) that have significant amounts of tall fescue throughout the fall and moving mares to lower risk pastures. Fortunately, ergovaline levels will typically drop after a couple of hard freezes, but these may not come till late December or early January if late fall weather is mild like 2022 and 2023. Feeding high quality hay or supplements can be a way to reduce or dilute tall fescue intake.

## KY Small Ruminant Master Grazing School

The Kentucky Small Ruminant Master Grazing School is a self-paced, online certification course designed to help you identify quality forages for your pastures, tell you how to plant them, how to manage them, and how to feed them to your animals. This course is chocked full of information created by the University of Kentucky Plant & Soil Science Department, and is great for small ruminant producers who are interested in enhancing the forage base of their pastures and who want to improve their rotational grazing system. In fact, it is so great that 100% of past participants are more confident about forage management, rotational grazing, and have made plans to enhance their grazing systems.

When you sign up you will have 365 days to complete the course material and to download additional resources and obtain technical support. If you would like to receive more information then join either the Kentucky Sheep & Wool Producers or the Kentucky Goat Producers Associations so we can give you even more support and education opportunities. You can learn more and register at <https://www.kysheepandgoat.org/ky-master-small-ruminant-grazing-school>

## First Herbicide Registered Safe for White Clover

Corteva just announced that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has approved the registration of NovaGraz™ herbicide, the only pasture herbicide in the U.S. that offers broad-spectrum weed control while preserving white clover and annual lespedeza for grazing. NovaGraz™ herbicide was previously referred to in technical communications as ProClova.

NovaGraz will be available for the 2025 application season, pending state registrations. In the meantime, visit [NovaGraz.us](http://NovaGraz.us) and [NovaGraz.us/bythenumbers](http://NovaGraz.us/bythenumbers) to learn more about this exciting new solution that cattle producers have been needing and asking for. Look for additional information from Corteva Range & Pasture on NovaGraz in the coming weeks.

## Equine Novel Endophyte Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop (UK Success Story)

University of Kentucky Forage Specialists and Associates worked with the national Alliance for Grassland Renewal to host the second Equine Novel Endophyte Tall Fescue Renovation workshop in January 2024 with over 120 people in attendance. This workshop included speakers from across the country. Participants included horse owners and farm managers

After the workshop, attendees had a much better understanding of managing existing toxic tall fescue stands and how to establish and manage safe, productive and high quality novel fescue stands. In Kentucky alone, tall fescue occupies close to 5 million acres and the lost opportunity costs from toxic fescue has been estimated at close to 100 million dollars.

The 2025 Edition of this workshop will be held Jan 29 at the Fayette County extension office.

### Securing Kentucky's Livestock (UK Success Story)

Implementing improved grazing management requires high quality fencing. Working with the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council and private industry representatives, UK specialists designed and implemented the Kentucky Fencing School in 2018. In 2023/2024 UK held four fencing schools with than 165 total participants. These programs focused on the proper installation of modern fencing technologies including fixed knot woven wire and electrified smooth high tensile fencing. The workshops are a unique mixture of classroom sessions and hands-on learning tailored for livestock producers. In a post-meeting survey, 100% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they would implement one or more of the practices that they learned. All respondents also felt that the training was a good value in terms of their time and money spent attending and would recommend this workshop to other producers or colleagues. Survey comments included “thank you for helping our generation and future ones continue the ag. world. Much Appreciated!! :)”, “lots of great information”, “Very Good Day! Thank You!”. Presentations from these schools were recorded and posted on the KYForages YouTube Channel. The next KY fencing school is being held just across the Ohio river from Maysville, KY in Felicity, OH. Go to the KYForages website for more information and to register.

UK Specialists involved: Chris Teutsch, Morgan Hayes, and Joshua Jackson

### Photos from the Pasture Ecology Workshop and the Heart of American Grazing Conference

(clockwise from top left: 1- electric fence reel race, 2 - temporary water options, 3 – Steve Blandford explaining soil type and soil health, 4 - Ray Archuletta, keynote speaker, 5 - Alan Franzluebers, keynote speaker)



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# Forage News



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

- Nov. 14** – KY/OH Fencing School, Felicity, OH
- Jan. 12-14** – AFGC Conference, Orlando, FL
- Jan. 17** – Forages at KCA, Owensboro, KY
- Jan. 29** – Equines and Endophyte Workshop, Lexington, KY
- Feb. 25** - Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference, Lexington, KY
- Mar. 6** – Tall Fescue Workshop, TBA
- April 29-30** – Beginning Grazing School, TBA
- Sept. 24-25** – Intermediate Grazing School, TBA