

UK Horse Pasture Evaluation Program

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Strategic Goals:

- ✓ Reducing the Potential for Foaling Problems
- ✓ Economic Benefits of Pasture

The UK Horse Pasture Evaluation Program continues to develop stronger ties with Kentucky's equine industry in the areas of research, extension and teaching. The Pasture Evaluation Program has been going strong since 2005 conducting 70 evaluations and covering over 11,000 total farm acres. The two main objectives are: 1) to provide detailed pasture management recommendations to horse farm owners and managers and 2) the evaluation of tall fescue within pastures and its potential to cause fescue toxicity in pregnant broodmares. This year, 2009, we are focusing on the economics of pasture vs. feeding hay and showing how well-maintained pastures can reduce your overall feeding cost.

The two tables below show the cost of maintaining horses on well managed pasture is **less than half** the cost of feeding hay.

Average Cost per Grazing Day
Pasture Maintenance Cost per Acre

| | \$125 | \$150 | \$175 |
|-----------------|--------|---------------|--------|
| Acres per Horse | | | |
| 2 acres | \$1.04 | \$1.25 | \$1.46 |
| 3 acres | \$1.56 | \$1.88 | \$2.19 |
| 4 acres | \$2.08 | \$2.50 | \$2.92 |

Average Cost per Day on Purchased Hay
Cost of Hay per Ton

| | \$200 | \$250 | \$300 |
|-----------------|--------|---------------|--------|
| Hay Fed per Day | | | |
| 25 lb | \$2.50 | \$3.13 | \$3.75 |
| 30 lb | \$3.00 | \$3.75 | \$4.50 |

*Estimates assume 240 grazing days per year.

"We think the Pasture Evaluation Program is a great asset to Kentucky's Horse Industry! The team's promptness in coming to the farm, astute observations, and detailed recommendations has helped us tremendously! It was only days after our follow up meeting that we started rehabilitating our paddocks and fields. We simply took the recommendations to a local farm supply store and they put together everything we needed - as simple and clear as that! I know I will be referring to the notebook as the farm's Bible!"

—Previous Program Participant.

Due to the program's tremendous success, we are pleased to offer an expanded pasture evaluation service to horse farms in the Central Bluegrass area in 2009. If interested in this year's program, please complete and submit the attached enrollment form. Farms will be contacted in the order they are received. We look forward to the 2009 program and plan to continue expanding the available services in upcoming years.

Farm Enrollment:

Simply fill out the enclosed enrollment form and fax or mail to Dr. Ray Smith. You may also email the requested information to tom.keene@uky.edu. If you have any questions concerning the program, please call Tom Keene at 859-257-3144 or Dr. Ray Smith at 859-257-3358 or visit the U.K. Forage Website at <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/HorseLinks.htm>. Following enrollment, an initial visit will be scheduled at your farm to explain the complete details of the evaluation program and to



personally address any questions before the actual sampling date. The basic evaluation service *includes up to 6 paddocks per farm, but no more than 80 acres*. For example, if all of the paddocks are 25 acres in size, we can only sample 3 paddocks. (Please see “Additional Options” on enrollment form for additional acreage conditions.) For farms *less than 20 acres*, feel free to contact Tom Keene for alternate pricing.

Pasture Evaluation Program Timetable:

The 2009 pasture evaluation program will begin in April and end in October. Applications are accepted throughout the year.

Basic Service: 6 paddocks or 80 acres:

Assessment of pasture species composition

- ✓ Tall Fescue
- ✓ KY Bluegrass
- ✓ Orchardgrass
- ✓ White Clover
- ✓ Weeds (species identified)
- ✓ Bare Soil

Percent of tall fescue plants infected with fungal endophyte

Concentration of ergovaline (toxin) in tall fescue at date of sampling

Estimate of ergovaline intake for horses grazing each paddock

Parasite soil management and reducing parasite load techniques

Comprehensive soil map of entire farm

- Carrying capacity based on each soil type present on farm
- Recommended number of acres per horse per year for each soil type present on farm
- Explanation of soils on farm with total acres of each type

We will link you with your county agent to provide consultation for soil sampling and analysis

Satellite photo of your farm

GPS map of each field sampled with mapped locations of sampled areas, useful for tracking improvements in pasture management

Printed digital photographs of individual pasture areas sampled

“Pasture and Paddock Action Log” for keeping records in each field

General guidelines on management of pastures, including options for: weed control, soil fertility, grazing management, pasture renovation and reestablishment, grass species and variety choices, tall fescue management, interpreting ergovaline levels, and options for removal of tall fescue from Central Kentucky pastures

CD ROM containing all data, photographs, analysis, and an electronic version of “Pasture and Paddock Action Log” in Microsoft Excel

Complete set of University of Kentucky extension publications related to horse pastures and selected national and international publications

★ Survey ★ of the farm evaluation. Your input, suggestions and ideas are vital for our program as we try to make it as beneficial as possible and expand services in upcoming years.

\$600 = 20% Price Reduction from 2008
\$500 for Previous Program Participants



Final delivery of comprehensive report:

A personal follow-up consultation will be scheduled with forage experts from UK, lasting approximately one hour, to interpret and explain all of the information gathered for your farm. This is an opportunity to discuss your farm’s pasture management in detail.

Additional options:

Pilot Study Measuring Ascarid Egg Contamination. ★ No charge this year ★

We will collect soil samples from a pasture that recently supported foals and examine ascarid egg contamination microscopically. Little is known concerning the persistence of ascarid eggs in soil. This pilot study is a part of a collaborative effort to research their status.

Whole farm service or additional fields.

If you would like more than 6 fields or 80 acres sampled, we will do so for **\$10 per acre**.

Follow-up ergovaline measurements.

We will re-sample your fields at a later date and report the ergovaline levels for **\$75 per field**.

***UK Horse Pasture Evaluation Program
Enrollment Form***

Date: _____

Farm Name: _____

Farm Owner: _____

Farm Manager: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone: Office _____

Cellular _____

FAX: _____

Email: _____

Total Acreage of Farm: _____

Physical Address of the farm:

Mailing Address:

Fields to be sampled (6 fields; up to 80 acres for \$600; \$500 for Previous Program Participants):

| | Field # | Acres/Field | | Field # | Acres/Field |
|---|----------------|--------------------|----|----------------|--------------------|
| 1 | | | 6 | | |
| 2 | | | 7 | | |
| 3 | | | 8 | | |
| 4 | | | 9 | | |
| 5 | | | 10 | | |

Initial visit to be scheduled upon receipt of this form.

Additional Options:

- Ascarid Egg Count Pilot Study, limited enrollment, no charge
- Additional fields/acres (list above), \$10/acre
- Follow-up ergovaline measurements, \$75 per field

If possible, please include a farm map with the enrollment form.

FAX this form to:

1-859-323-1952 (attn: Dr. Ray Smith)

Or mail to:

Dr. Ray Smith
N222-D Agriculture Science North
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40546-0091