



FORAGE NEWS

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FORAGES AT KCA

Over 200 people attended and participated in the Forages at KCA Symposium to kick off a most successful Kentucky Cattlemen's Convention in Owensboro. My thanks to Dave Maples and all the fine folks at KCA for all their help with facilities. Special thanks to speakers Ray Smith, Bill Witt, Tom Keene, and Glen Aiken. I also express appreciation to Christi Forsythe for editing, printing and having the proceedings available at the meeting.

HEART OF AMERICA GRAZING CONFERENCE

Over 350 people from 12 states attended and participated in the HOAGC at the Cave City Convention Center January 25-26. My thanks to all who attended, speakers, committee members, exhibitors, sponsors and all others for making the Conference so successful. Special THANKS are extended to Christi Forsythe for serving as secretary for the Conference and taking care of all the details.

See you in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, January 24-25, 2007 for the 6th HOAGC.

NITROGEN COSTS AND THE VALUE OF LEGUMES

The cost of fertilizer has risen this year due to higher prices for oil and natural gas. For example, nitrogen prices have increased at least 50 percent. This makes it even more important for forage growers to efficiently utilize fertilizer.

A critical first step is to take soil samples to determine what fertilizers are actually needed. A very important second step is to add lime if it is needed to get soil pH up to recommended levels. The proper pH is necessary for plants to efficiently utilize nutrients and to promote the growth of legumes. Legumes, in turn, are very important in reducing fertilizer costs due to their ability to "fix" nitrogen from the air for plant use. At today's nitrogen prices, forage legumes can supply \$40 to over \$80 worth of

nitrogen per acre per year. Late February and March are the best times to establish legumes in pasture and hay fields. Stop by your County Cooperative Extension Service Office for information on renovating pastures. (*Monroe Rasnake, UK Extension Agronomist*)

IT WILL SOON BE CALVING SEASON

February is here and the days are definitely getting longer...a sure harbinger that spring is right around the corner.

Now is the time when many producers' thoughts turn to spring calving. Calves will soon be hitting the ground and cows will meet their maximum nutrient requirements after parturition. With calves at their sides, producers need to make sure that these cows are receiving the necessary nutrient levels to make milk for the calf, maintain body weight, and then breed back.

Having your hay tested is a good way to make sure that you are meeting that cows nutrient requirements. If you haven't already had your hay tested, now is an excellent time to do so.

Contact the Kentucky Department of Agriculture (KDA) at 1-800-248-4628 and inquire about their hay testing program or see their website (www.kyagr.com). They will come to your farm to collect a sample or you can mail samples directly to them. Make sure to follow proper core sampling procedures (see foragetesting.org for description) when collecting your hay sample.

Also, contact your local county agent to assist with hay testing. He/she will also be able to help balance a ration for your current livestock needs. Then you can match your hay analysis with your current supplement analysis and adjust accordingly.

After proper sampling and ration balancing, you can then be confident that you are maximizing nutrient levels as well as cost.What a good way to start off your spring! (*Tom Keene, UK Hay Marketing Specialist*)

UK BEEF/FORAGE FIELD DAY JUNE 15

Put Thursday June 15 on your calendar for the 2006 Beef/Forage Field Day at the UK Woodford County Farm. Topics include forage weed control, successful legume seeding techniques, grazing corn, cost effective pasture fertilization, rotational grazing, reducing fescue toxicity, handling facilities, cattle genetics and management, and much more ...

TALL FESCUE ON-LINE MONOGRAPH" AVAILABILITY

The "Tall Fescue On-line Monograph" is now available as part of the Forage Information System website. The direct access URL is <http://forages.oregonstate.edu/is/tfis/book.cfm?PageID=372>

This on-line monograph describes historical, current, and potential future uses of tall fescue, one of the most important forage, turf, and soil conservation species in the world. It contains peer-reviewed contributions from teams of authors recognized for their specific subject matter expertise. It also represents the collective effort of a multidisciplinary team of computer-based technology experts, including design, implementation, and delivery components.

Traditional agronomic approaches coupled with current and future computer-based applications are increasingly applied to improve understanding and efficiency leading to more economically and environmentally sustainable forage-livestock systems. This monograph seeks to incorporate these approaches in addressing efficient production, environmental protection, and effective outreach issues.

COMPARATIVE LAMB AND HEIFER GROWTH RATES ON NON-TOXIC AND ENDOPHYTE- FREE TALL FESCUE

Tall fescue infected with endophyte has detrimental effects on livestock. Although the usual option for avoiding endophyte toxicity is use of endophyte-free cultivars, these stands frequently become re-infested with toxic-endophyte fescue. A new option for avoiding toxicity is the use of non-toxic endophyte tall fescue. Non-toxic endophytes are strains of endophyte that have negligible production of the toxic alkaloids but are identical in every other respect. Currently the tall fescue cultivar Jesup with a non-toxic endophyte is being marketed as MaxQ tall fescue. The objectives of this study were to establish E- and MaxQ pastures to quantify re-infestation by toxic endophyte and measure the performance of livestock grazing these treatments. We found a low level (7.3%) of toxic endophyte in endophyte-free tall fescue over 3 yr, and no toxic endophyte in MaxQ. We found similar lamb and heifer growth rates on both pastures. We concluded that non-toxic endophyte tall fescue was a valid option for livestock production in regions in Ohio that were dominated by toxic endophyte tall fescue. There was some evidence that MaxQ pastures are less likely to show re-infestation by toxic endophyte tall fescue than E- pastures. (*J. Barker, R. Little, D. Samples, C.D. Penrose, R.M. Sulc, J.S. McCormick, T.L. Bultemeier, M.R. Burgess IN Forage Progress, Vol. 3, Dec. 2005*)

FIELD EXPERIENCE WITH STRIP GRAZING STANDING CORN AS AN ECONOMICAL ALTERNATIVE FOR WINTERING BEEF COWS IN THE MIDWEST

Differences in feed costs account for over 56% of the variation in profitability of beef cow production systems and winter feeding is generally the largest single expense of maintaining a beef breeding herd. A seven-year field demonstration was conducted to determine the feasibility and costs associated with wintering cows on limit-fed, strip-grazed standing corn supplemented with small amounts of corn gluten feed as an alternative to other winter feeding programs. Total daily feed costs ranged from \$0.39 to \$0.46/cow per day and averaged \$0.42. Daily costs for a hay or silage program averaged \$1.26 and \$0.93, respectively. Machinery and labor costs were less for the limit-fed corn system averaging \$0.05 per head per day compared to \$0.14 for both the hay and silage system. Target nutrient intakes were achieved and nutrient requirements of gestating cows were satisfied. Cow performance was satisfactory. Cows gained weight each year and subsequent conception rates were not affected. Management is relatively simple and waste is uniformly distributed to the land by the animals. (*K. Nimrick, D. Oswald, and R. Staff IN Forage Progress, Vol. 3, Dec. 2005*)

FREE NITROGEN

Nitrogen prices are at historic highs. Free N is available in the form of red and white clover. Simply use the following recommendations to successfully frost seed clover.

- 1 - Graze hard to reduce residue (you want to see some bare soil).
- 2 - Lime and fertilize to soil test recommendations.
- 3 - Broadcast 4-6 lb/acre red clover and 1-2 lb/acre of ladino white clover in February (early is better). Freezing and thawing will bury the seed.
- 4 - Leave cattle off pasture, then flash graze as soon as grass starts to overtake the clover seedlings, and then rest pasture again until clover established.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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| FEB 23 | 26 th Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Fayette County Extension Office, Lexington |
| MAR 10-14 | American Forage & Grassland Council, San Antonio, TX |
| JUN 15 | Beef/Forage Field Day, UK Woodford County Farm, Versailles |



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