



# FORAGE NEWS

For more forage information, visit our UK Forage Extension Website at: <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage>

**January 2008**

*Garry D. Lacefield and S. Ray Smith, Extension Forage Specialists • Christi Forsythe, Secretary*

## HEART OF AMERICA GRAZING CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN MISSOURI

The HOAGC will be held at the Holiday Inn Select in Columbia, MO January 7-8. This marks the seventh consecutive year that five states (Kentucky, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio) have joined forces for a major conference on grazing. The committee has done an excellent job in bringing together leading speakers to address cutting-edge grazing issues. The opening session keynote speaker is Mr. Kit Pharo, a cattle producer from Cheyenne Well, Colorado. Kit will address the topic "From Production to Profit". For complete details, including registration and lodging, see our website at [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/HOAGC\\_brochure08b.pdf](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/HOAGC_brochure08b.pdf)

## FORAGE PRODUCERS TO BE FEATURED AT KCA

**Forages at KCA**  
Friday, January 11, 2008  
Lexington Convention Center  
Elkhorn B & C  
Lexington, Kentucky  
**Kentucky Forages**

- 2:00 p.m. Welcome
- 2:10 Kentucky's Forage Resources – Garry Lacefield  
**Making Forages Work Down on the Farm**
- 2:30 Lowell Clifford – Beef – Harrison County
- 3:00 Jason Sandefur – Beef – Bourbon County
- 3:30 Russell Hackley – Beef – Grayson County
- 4:00 Todd Clark – Beef/Hay – Fayette County
- 4:30 Discussion

## PLAN TO ATTEND THE AFGC/SRM FORAGE CONFERENCE IN LOUISVILLE JANUARY 26-31

Before you receive the next issue of Forage News, the largest Forage Conference in the country will have just been held. So this is your last chance to sign up for this conference. Go to [www.afgc.org](http://www.afgc.org) to register for the conference and to see the full details of the program. If you miss this meeting, you will miss some of the most informative forage sessions in Kentucky. The main days of the conference are Monday through Thursday noon (Jan. 28-31). If you are not able to attend all four of these days, then make sure to attend Tuesday and hear number of practical symposia and the National Forage Spokesperson contest. We look forward to seeing each of you in Louisville.

## 2007 VARIETY TEST REPORTS

The 2007 Forage Variety Test reports are now available. Check with your county agent for a copy of these reports or go to [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage) for the current report or all yearly reports from 2001-2007. We have continued to develop the summary report that

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UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND KENTUCKY COUNTIES, COOPERATING

contains all of the variety testing information for the last 10 years in easy to read comparative tables for each species. 2007 was a tough year with the April freeze and drought conditions. Overall, forage yields were down in the testing program, but the advantages of improved varieties were all the more apparent. We want to especially thank Mr. Gene Olson for continue to manage the over 5,000 forage plots across the state. Gene is the state coordinator of Kentucky's program, which is one of the most well respected variety testing programs in the eastern U.S.

## CLEARING UP THE CONFUSION BETWEEN EATING MEAT, CANCER, AND OBESITY

Recently, the World Cancer Research Federation and the American Institution for Cancer Research released a study on the causes of cancer. These two groups reviewed over 7,000 research papers that focused on the link between obesity and cancer as well as how diet contributes to both. The research groups concluded that meat was an energy dense food that contained unsafe levels of saturated fats and consumption of meat was contributing to the obesity/cancer epidemic. Therefore, they recommended that Americans should eat no more than 18 ounces of meat per week and totally avoid processed meats such as bacon, ham, smoked sausage, etc. Obviously these conclusions were disputed by several organizations in the meat industry. The American Meat Institute discovered that the study only focused on research that was negative toward meat consumption and ignored studies that found no link between eating meat and cancer. Furthermore, commodity groups like the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the National Pork Producers Council fired back as well. Approximately two weeks after this landmark report was released, several research papers were published indicating no link between obesity and cancer.

These conflicting results leaves the public confused about what they should do lower their risk of cancer and what constitutes a healthy diet. Rest assured meat fits into a healthy diet. Meat contains all the essential amino acids and meat proteins are 95 to 100% digestible, whereas plant proteins are only 65 to 70% digestible. Although meat does contain saturated fats, each livestock commodity offers lean cuts that are low in fat and saturated fats. Furthermore, meat is a good source of vitamins and minerals, and remains the only natural source for certain B-vitamins. The iron in meat is highly absorbable, 4 times more than other food sources. Also, meat supplies 40% of your daily requirement of zinc. The consumption of meat is vital for cognitive development of children and young adults, and does fit into a healthy lifestyle. Whether its meats, fruits, or vegetables moderation should be practiced and exercise should always be part of a healthy lifestyle.

*(Dr. Gregg Rentfrow, Meat Science Extension Specialist,  
University of Kentucky)*

## TEFF LOOKS GOOD IN PENNSYLVANIA TRIALS

Teff has been advertised this past year as being the best thing since "sliced bread". Here is some background about Teff and some yield data from Teff growing at Rock Springs and Landisville, PA.

Teff is a major cereal crop in Ethiopia and has been used as a forage crop throughout Africa. It is a warm-season, summer annual grass (will grow only in summer and won't survive a Pennsylvania winter) with rapid seed germination and seedling development. As you might expect from there it is commonly grown, Teff is well adapted to dry climates. Recommended seeding rates of Teff are 4-5 pounds per acre.

Without irrigation and under dry conditions, Teff was ready for harvest about 50 days after planting. It regrew quickly and a second harvest was made after only 14 days. A third harvest was made about 30 days later. Additional harvests will be made until the plants stop growing this fall. Teff had slightly lower yields than sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass (Table 1). However, sudangrass and sorghum-sudangrass are difficult to harvest as hay, while Teff hay entered in the Hay Show at Progress Days was green, leafy and high in quality.

**Table 1. Yield (tons/acre) as of Sept. 1, 2007 of Teff compared with other warm-season annual grasses at Rock Springs and Landisville, Pennsylvania.**

Species, Variety	RS	LA
	t/a	t/a
Teff, Pharaoh	2.6	3.7
Teff, Tiffany	2.4	4.1
Teff, Corvallis	2.7	4.1
Millet, Wonderleaf	3.4	5.2
Sudangrass, Haymaker	3.3	4.0
Sorghum-sudangrass, Summer King	4.0	5.7
Sorghum-sudangrass, Summer Queen	3.8	3.3
Sorghum-sudangrass, Summer Prince	4.1	5.8
Sorghum-sudangrass, Summer Dream	3.8	3.3

(SOURCE: Marvin Hall, Penn State Univ. IN *Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland News*, Vol. 17, No. 4, Fall 2007)

## KENTUCKY FACTS

Total Land Area: 25,338,000 acres  
39,732 square miles  
Population: 4,041,769  
Number of Farms: 84,000 (Ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> behind Texas, Missouri and Iowa)  
Land in Farms: 13,700,000 acres farmland accounts for 54 percent of the total acreage in Kentucky  
Average Farm Size: 163 acres  
(SOURCE: *Kentucky Agricultural Facts*, May 2007)

## EFFECT OF HAY FEEDING METHODS ON COW PERFORMANCE, HAY WASTE, AND WINTERING COST

**ABSTRACT** – A 3-yr investigation was conducted to determine the effect of hay feeding methods on cow wintering cost. A conventional method of rolling round bales out on the ground was compared with shredding round hay bales on the ground with a bale processor and with feeding hay in a tapered-cone round bale feeder. The cows used in the study were in the third trimester of pregnancy and were fed for an average of 59 d during the test period. Data recorded from the multiple-year study was then used to prepare an economic analysis model with operating budgets for 100- and 300-head reference herds. Feeding bales in a tapered-cone round bale feeder increased cow weight gain, tended to increase rib fat depth, reduced estimated hay consumption by an average of 10.2% compared with rolling bales out on the ground or using a bale processor to shred hay on the ground, and reduced hay waste in the first 2 yr of the study when alfalfa-grass hay was fed, but not in the last year when oat hay was fed. The tapered-cone round bale feeder reduced waste, decreased the amount of hay required per cow, and decreased wintering cost per cow while maintaining body condition. Overall, for the 3 yr evaluation period, using the tapered-cone round bale feeder reduced wintering cost by 21.0% for a 100-cow reference herd and 17.6% for a 300-cow reference herd compared with feeding with a bale processor. (SOURCE: D.G. Landblom, et al., *North Dakota State Univ. IN The Professional Animal Scientist* 23 (2007):246-252)

## KENTUCKY'S AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

**2007 Review:** 2007 in the aggregate was another good year financially for Kentucky agriculture with farm cash receipts totaling an estimated (UK estimate) \$4.22 billion, a record amount! This record occurred despite the fact that a late spring freeze hurt the horticulture industry and the well-publicized drought resulted in lower crop yields around the state. Livestock receipts led the way at over \$3 billion representing a 10.9% increase. Significant gains were registered in equine, cattle and calves and poultry. Most of these gains were due to continued strong prices. Cattle receipts were higher, in part, as some were sent to market due to poor pasture conditions. Crop cash receipts totaled \$1.215 billion, down 6.5% over year earlier levels and certainly the drought played a major role in the decline. Corn cash receipts, however, were up more than 35% reflecting significant increases in acreage planted over the previous year coupled with higher prices. The fruit crop was severely damaged by the late spring freeze, but vegetable crop cash receipts increased more than 15% to \$23 million. Collectively, poultry, cattle and calves and equine enterprises represented more than 62% of total farm cash receipts in 2007. Equine continued to be the largest enterprise with cash receipts exceeding \$1.1 billion.

Kentucky net farm income in 2007 was the third highest on record at \$1.7 billion, following the record \$2.1 billion in 2005 according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. We expect 2007 net farm income to remain relatively strong in response to record cash receipts. However, net farm income levels have been dampened by drought, declining government transfer payments and higher production expenses.

**2008 Outlook:** Assuming normal growing conditions and no major disease outbreaks, farm cash receipts in 2008 are expected to set an all-time record of \$4.294 billion! During the past several years, rising cash receipts were primarily due to stronger livestock receipts. Next year, however, we expect crop receipts to be up 12% while livestock receipts to decrease 2.4%. The crop receipt forecast is based on what we hope will be more normal growing conditions.

Despite projected record farm cash receipts, we do not expect record net farm income as higher cash receipts will be offset by lower government payments and higher input prices, but net farm income will be very strong by historical standards. Farm balance sheets (on average) continue to be very strong. Major factors to monitor in the farm economy in 2008 (beyond weather and disease) will be energy prices, the continued fallout from the sub-prime mortgage market and the Doha round of trade negotiations. In addition, the nature of the final farm bill remains unclear as it has yet to be approved in Washington, D.C. (SOURCE: *Larry Jones and Will Snell IN The Kentucky Agricultural Economic Outlook for 2008 newsletter edited by Laura Powers*)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

JAN 7-8 Heart of America Grazing Conference, Columbia, MO  
JAN 11 Forages at KCA, Lexington  
JAN 26-31 SRM/AFGC Forage Conference, Louisville  
FEB 21 28<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City  
SEP 4 KFGC Field Day, Christian County



Garry D. Laceyfield  
Extension Forage Specialist  
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