

# FORAGE NEWS

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

**July 2008**

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

## **KFGC FIELD DAY IN CHRISTIAN COUNTY**

The Kentucky Forage & Grassland Council Annual Field Day will be held in Christian County near Hopkinsville on September 4, 2008. The afternoon-evening event will be at the Nowak Farm. Jay Stone, John Nowak and others on the program committee are finalizing details for stops, presentations, exhibits and meal. Special emphasis on hay production, quality and marketing will be featured along with grazing. More details in next month's Forage News.

## **KFGC FORAGE SPOKESMAN NOMINATIONS**

Kentucky holds the national record for having more National Forage Spokesman winners than any other state. The reigning National Forage Spokesman is Barry Drury from Woodford County. We are now accepting nominations for the next Forage Spokesman Contest to be held in conjunction with the Kentucky Grazing Conference in Lexington October 23. If you would like to nominate a Kentucky Forage Producer to participate, please send a nomination to Dr. Ray Smith, Plant & Soil Science Dept., 105 Plant Science Bldg., 1405 Veterans Road, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY 40546-0312 or by e-mail to [raysmith1@uky.edu](mailto:raysmith1@uky.edu). Nominations should contain nominees' name, address, and a brief (less than one page) paragraph describing the candidates forage program. To view the 2008 National Forage Spokesman presentation, visit the following website [http://www.kfgc.org/2008\\_afgc\\_spokes/Barry%20Drury\\_AFGC%202008/BDrury.html](http://www.kfgc.org/2008_afgc_spokes/Barry%20Drury_AFGC%202008/BDrury.html)

## **KFGC AWARDS NOMINATION**

Each year, the Kentucky Forage & Grassland Council presents Forage Awards to individuals that have made significant contributions to Kentucky's Forage Industry. Awards will be presented in four categories (producer, public (county and state), and industry) at the KFGC Business Meeting in conjunction with the Kentucky Grazing Conference October 23 in Lexington. To nominate a deserving individual, please send a one page nomination to Dr. Garry Lacefield, Research & Education Center, P.O. Box 469, Princeton, KY 42445 or by e-mail to [glacefie@uky.edu](mailto:glacefie@uky.edu). For a list of past award recipients, see our website <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/KFGC%20Award%20Winners%20History.pdf> Deadline for submitting nominations is September 19, 2008.

## **THE UK BEEF BASH 2008: A DIFFERENT KIND OF FIELD DAY**

Mark your calendars now for a different kind of field day! The first ever Beef Bash will be held at the Research & Education Center in Princeton on September 23, 2008. More information about exhibits and other educational opportunities coming soon!

This is an excellent opportunity to visit with UK research, extension and administrative personnel as well as the leadership of the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association. Visit <http://ces.ca.uky.edu/beefirm/bash/> for updated information. Sponsored by the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture and the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association. (Source: Lori Porter, Extension Associate, University of Kentucky)

## **CERTIFIED NOXIOUS WEED SEED FREE HAY AND STRAW PROGRAM**

As many of you are aware, there is a growing demand in North America for the use of certified noxious weed seed free hay and straw as a preventative program to limit the spread of noxious weeds. This voluntary certification program is designed to assure that hay and straw sold with proper certification identification meets minimum standards designed to limit the spread of noxious weeds. Buyers are provided assurance that hay and straw certified through this program meets these minimum standards.

Kentucky Seed Improvement Association (KSIA) has been designated as the official seed certification agency in Kentucky by the University of Kentucky, College of Agriculture. KSIA has also been designated as the agency to administer a Noxious Weed Seed Free Hay and Straw Program in the state by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture.

The preliminary steps to establish this program have been completed. However, due to personnel changes within KSIA and a need for inspector training, the implementation of the program will not take place until the spring of 2009. Until this time, if there are any questions or comments, please contact the Kentucky Seed Improvement Association, 3250 Iron Works Pike, Lexington KY 40511; phone (859) 281-1029; fax (859) 253-3119; email [kyseed1@gmail.com](mailto:kyseed1@gmail.com) or [khunter.ksia@gmail.com](mailto:khunter.ksia@gmail.com). (SOURCE: Kenny Hunter, Kentucky Seed Improvement Association Manager)

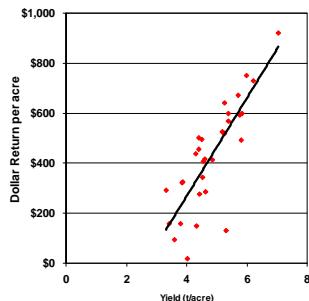
## **NITROGEN FOR STOCKPILING FESCUE**

Nitrogen prices continue to increase in Kentucky and throughout the U.S., but prices for stored feed also continue to increase. Start planning now for stockpiling tall fescue for late fall and winter grazing. Stockpiled tall fescue will provide high quality, palatable forage and reduce the cost of winter feeding. The most efficient application time to insure strong fall growth is early to mid-August on grazed (3 to 4") or hayed fescue stands. Recommended N application rates are 50 to 80 lb N per acre, but rates as low as 30 to 40 lb N per acre will enhance growth and improve forage quality. Ammonium nitrate is the preferred N fertilizer because it does not volatilize in hot weather. Price and availability are certainly big issues with ammonium nitrate. If urea is used it should be applied immediately before rain or used with the additive Agrotain which reduces volatilization losses.

## FORAGE SEEDING RATE CALCULATOR

Dr. Dan Undersander and colleagues at the University of Wisconsin have developed a Seeding Rate Calculator that is applicable to our conditions here in Kentucky. We have it listed on our Forage Website [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage) under the Forage Decision Aids link. That link will take you to the Wisconsin Forage Research and Extension Website. Once there, click on Pasture and Hay Seeding Rate Calculator listed under Current Issues for Wisconsin Farmers.

## ALFALFA YIELD AND DOLLAR RETURN FROM WISCONSIN GREEN-GOLD PROGRAM



Profitability increases with yield

- fixed inputs remain constant
- variable inputs increase only slightly

SOURCE: Dan Undersander, Agronomy, University of Wisconsin

## RELATIVE TOXICITY TO HORSES OF THREE SPECIES OF BLISTER BEETLES

	Estimated number required to cause mortality in a horse weighing:		
	275 lbs	550 lbs	825 lbs
Black blister beetle	550	1,100	1,700
Spotted blister beetle	175	345	520
Three stripe blister beetle	40	80	120

Adapted from Capinera et al. 1985. J. Econ. Entomol. 78:1052-55.

## CHANGES IN U.S. DAIRY INDUSTRY SINCE 1935

Year	Dairy farms	Milk cows	Total milk	Cows/farm	Milk/cow
	Thousands	1,000 hd	billion lbs	Cows	lbs/hd/yr
1935	>4,100	24,187	100	6	4,184
1965	1,108	14,953	124	13	8,305
2006	75	9,112	182	121	19,939

SOURCE: Dr. Neal Martin, USDA/ARS Dairy Forage Research Center, Madison, WI

## LINE UP FORAGE VARIETIES EARLY FOR FALL PLANTING

Seed supplies for improved forage grass and legume varieties are tight this year. If you are considering fall planting, now is the time to line up seed supplies. Prices have increased for many species like clovers, but with high demand for N fixing legumes there is little chance that prices will drop. Orchardgrass seed price remains high, and will continue to do so with crop production problems in the NW and pressure from other higher value crops. One bright spot is improved fescue varieties, there should be ample supplies and competitive prices.

Make sure to review UK forage variety test reports before purchasing seed. Either review the 2007 Summary Report covering all grasses and legumes or for more detail see the 11 individual variety test reports for 2007. Kentucky has the most extensive forage variety testing program in the southeast, make sure to select a variety that will provide high hay yields or strong pasture survival under our environmental conditions. Go to [www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage](http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage) and click under Forage Variety Trials or contact your local county agent for a hard copy.

## ROUNDUP READY ALFALFA ON TRACK FOR 2009 RETURN

It looks like Roundup Ready alfalfa seed will be available to growers again late next year. USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) reportedly is on schedule preparing the court-ordered environmental impact statement (EIS) on Roundup Ready alfalfa, and proponents are confident it will show that the transgenic alfalfa and conventional alfalfa can successfully co-exist.

Mark McCaslin, president of Forage Genetics International, was part of a National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance (NAFA) delegation that recently visited APHIS in Washington, D.C. "We asked for an update on the court-ordered Roundup Ready alfalfa EIS," he reports. "They told us they expect to have a draft EIS completed by the end of 2008 or very early 2009." Following a public comment period, the agency will draft a final EIS. "They said that at this stage they believe the EIS process is on track for the promised two-year completion, suggesting a deregulation decision in late 2009," says McCaslin.

He says a critical part of the EIS will focus on a review of stewardship strategies for managing co-existence of alfalfa seed and forage production for genetically enhanced (GE) and various GE-sensitive markets. "Based on NAFA's positive conclusions from its comprehensive analysis of co-existence strategies (summarized on NAFA's Web site, [www.alfalfa.org](http://www.alfalfa.org)), I am optimistic about a positive outcome."

Although two years seems like a long time, it's in the best interest of the alfalfa industry that the EIS is as thorough as possible to minimize the risk of a new lawsuit challenging the process and the deregulation decision, says McCaslin. "APHIS appears cognizant of that risk, and is doing all it can to be sure that it adheres to the EIS process, and that the analysis is as thorough as possible."

On June 10, arguments were heard in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on an appeal of the May 3, 2007, permanent injunction prohibiting any new planting of Roundup Ready alfalfa seed. The appeal was filed by USDA, Forage Genetics, Monsanto and several Roundup Ready alfalfa growers, and argued by Mark Kesselman, the USDA general counsel. It asserts that the injunction imposed unnecessary restrictions and costs on alfalfa hay and seed growers.

"We're not thinking that this is going expedite the commercial availability of Roundup Ready alfalfa seed for new plantings," says McCaslin. "There are so many unknowns in the legal process, to predict any sort of outcome at this point would be very difficult."

He doubts that a January 2008 lawsuit challenging the legality of Roundup Ready sugarbeets will affect the Roundup Ready alfalfa case. Plaintiffs in the sugarbeet suit include the Center for Food Safety (CFS), the same group that led the lawsuit against Roundup Ready alfalfa, and it was filed in the same federal court in northern California. CFS tried unsuccessfully to get the sugarbeet suit adjoined to the Roundup Ready alfalfa case, says McCaslin.

"It's being handled as a completely separate case by a different judge, so it probably doesn't have much impact," he says.

Forage Genetics developed the first Roundup Ready alfalfa varieties under a licensing agreement with Monsanto. The varieties were introduced to growers in 2005, then were pulled off the market following a March 12, 2007, preliminary injunction and kept off by the May 3 permanent injunction. The lawsuit leading to the injunctions claimed, and the judge in the case agreed, that USDA erred when it deregulated Roundup Ready alfalfa without first completing an EIS. (SOURCE: *eHay Weekly*, June 17, 2008)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- SEP 4 KFGC Field Day, Christian County
- SEP 25 2008 All Commodity Field Day, UK Robinson Station, Jackson
- OCT 23 9<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference, Fayette County Extension Office, Lexington

### 2009

- JAN 21-22 Heart of America Grazing Conference, Columbus, IN
- FEB 19 29<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center

*Garry D. Lacefield*

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Extension Forage Specialist  
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