Awards.

Congratulations Clayton and Christopher on these National Season Grass Division.

Council for hosting a great National Tour in Rogers, AR. Great tour, represented NRCS, Wildlife Biologists, Department of Fish & Wildlife, Approximately one hundred people attended the intensive in-meal. Calendar for September 6 to attend an afternoon-evening field day with More details in future issues of Forage News. For now, mark your working on the program and will include, grazing alfalfa, rotational in the state BUT will feature more than hay. The planning committee is Farm. The Geralds Farm is one of the leading Commercial Hay Farms years' event will be held September 6 in Hart County on the Geralds first place in the Alfalfa-Grass and second place in the Perennial Cool-Season Grass Division. Congratulations Clayton and Christopher on these National Awards.

KENTUCKY HAY GROWER WINS NATIONAL HAY AWARDS

Hart County hay producer Clayton Geralds dominated the AFGC National Quality Hay Contest. He won first place in the Alfalfa Division, first place in the Alfalfa-Grass and second place in the Perennial Cool-Season Grass Division. Congratulations Clayton and Christopher on these National Awards.

KFGC FIELD DAY TO BE IN HART COUNTY

Each year the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council holds a statewide field day. The event is moved throughout Kentucky. This years’ event will be held September 6 in Hart County on the Geralds Farm. The Geralds Farm is one of the leading Commercial Hay Farms in the state BUT will feature more than hay. The planning committee is working on the program and will include, grazing alfalfa, rotational grazing, establishment, soils & fertility, pest control, innovations in haymaking, hay quality and storage. More details in future issues of Forage News. For now, mark your calendar for September 6 to attend an afternoon-evening field day with meal.

NATIVE WARM-SEASON GRASSES IN-SERVICE TRAINING

Approximately one hundred people attended the intensive in-service training on Warm Season Grasses in Hart County. Participants represented NRCS, Wildlife Biologists, Department of Fish & Wildlife, Industry representatives and producers. The training was conducted jointly by University of Kentucky and University of Tennessee. Our thanks to University of Tennessee personnel Dr. Pat Keyser, Dr. Gary Bates, Dr. Elizabeth Doxon and Dr. John Waller. We also thank Randy & John Seymour and all the fine folks at Roundstone Native Seed for hosting the event and opening their farm for the tours. Appreciation is extended to Chris Clark, Hart County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources for handling local arrangements.

If you were not able to attend and would be interested in any of the presentations, see our website for the PDF version of each.

AFGC NATIONAL TOUR

A very big thank you to the Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council for hosting a great National Tour in Rogers, AR. Great tour, great weather and a good time had by all.

IF BALING HAY WET, WATCH FOR FIRES

Growers baling and storing hay that’s 20% or higher in moisture should diligently check its temperature to avoid possible hay fires. As stacked hay’s temperatures rise, the risk of spontaneous combustion also increases, warns Penn State Extension forage specialist Marvin Hall.

The slightest odor of smoldering hay, or a haystack that’s warm or hot to the touch, signals that a fire may already be burning, he says. The only way to determine the severity of the problem is to take temperature readings of the stack. Hall suggests the following guidelines:

As stack temperatures reach 150°F, check them twice daily. If possible, disassemble the stack to improve air circulation and cooling. Use caution if moving heated bales away from buildings or combustible material, as they can burst into flames when exposed to air. He suggests first wetting those bales down.

If a stack averages 160°, check its temperature every two hours. At 175°, a stack could contain hot spots or fire pockets. At this point, stop all air movement around the hay, if possible, and alert the local fire service.

At 190°, remove hot hay with the assistance of the fire service. (SOURCE: Hay & Forage Grower, eHay Weekly, June 5, 2012)

CUSTOM GRAZING OF STOCKER CATTLE

The number of questions received about custom grazing has seemed to increase over the last few years. Some of this interest is likely due to an increased focus on backgrounding in Kentucky, but it is also likely due to some of the attractive risk management features of custom grazing arrangements. The purpose of this article is to provide a quick overview of what custom grazing is, as well as discuss some of the key features from the perspective of both the grazer and cattle owner.

In a custom grazing system, owners of calves pay a grazer to pasture their cattle for a period of time. There are many ways in which these arrangements can be made, but two of the more common approaches are for the grazer to be paid a set amount per head or for every pound of gain while on the grazing program. Custom grazing arrangements are business agreements, and should be treated as such. I would recommend that each party agree in writing to the terms of their arrangement. In addition to payment terms, parties should also be clear on who is responsible for other expenses such as transportation, minerals, vaccines and health treatments, death loss, etc.

Custom grazing can be attractive to both parties for different reasons. In the case of the grazer, less risk is taken on and short-term capital requirements are much lower. The grazer does not bear the market risks associated with the volatile feeder cattle markets, which have created challenges for many backgrounders. Rather than market risk, graziers are primarily accepting animal performance and weather risk. If calves don’t gain well on pasture, or if pasture conditions limit calf gain, the grazer does not see as much revenue. Further, the grazer does not have the capital needs compared to purchasing stockers for the grazing season. Input needs, beyond the pasture itself, are usually limited to mineral, fertilizer, lime, and other pasture maintenance expenses.

As for the cattle owner, short-term capital requirements remain high and the risk associated with the calf and feeder cattle markets is still present. However, they do shift some of the production risk to the grazer. It is also attractive to the cattle owner that the primary input
cost (feed / pasture) can be easily budgeted in a custom grazing
system. Finally, in situations where backgrounders want to expand,
but don’t want to purchase additional pasture, custom grazing provides an
opportunity to run more stockers without a great deal of long-term
investment.
A lot of feeder cattle market discussion centers on price risk
management, which is warranted given the recent volatility in cattle
markets. Forward contracts and futures markets often are at the
center of these discussions. However, custom grazing is another risk
management tool that adds the various tasks associated with backgrounding.
In volatile markets with increasing capital requirements, arrangements such as this are worth
consideration. (Kenny Burdine, UK Extension Economist)

AFGC 2013 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
The 2013 AFGC Annual Conference will be held January 6-8,
2013 at the Marriott River Center in Covington, KY (the southern side of OH). To make reservations at the group rate of $99 per night plus
tax please contact the Marriott River Center at 859-261-2900 or 800-
266-6605 and mention you are attending the American Forage and
Grassland Council Conference.
We invite anyone interested in presenting an oral, poster or
symposium presentation to complete the Call for Presentations Form.
You can find an agenda outline by clicking here. You may also support the conference by sponsoring or
exhibiting. For more information on how to sponsor a booth or sponsor
the conference or specific event please visit www.afgc.org.
You can also donate items to the AFGC Silent Auction. Please visit
www.afgc.org for the donation form.

AFGC 2013 NATIONAL COMPETITIONS
AFGC will hold the National Forage Spokesperson, National
Emerging Scientist, National Youth Essay and National Photo Contest
during the 2013 Annual Conference.
• The deadline to nominate a National Forage Spokesperson
is November 1, 2012. If your state competition is being held
after that date please contact the AFGC Office.
• The deadline for the National Emerging Scientist
Competition is September 1, 2012.
• The deadline for the National Youth Essay Competition is
November 1, 2012.
• The deadline for the National Photo Contest entries is
December 1, 2012.
Please take just a few minutes to review the details of each
competition and submit an entry. Click here for more details.
For additional information please visit www.afgc.org anytime or
email info@afgc.org or contact AFGC at 800.944.2342.

Reducing Energy Use in Production Agriculture
Running a farm takes a lot of energy—in more ways than one. In
2009, Minnesota’s 81,000 farms spent more than $700 million on
transportation fuel and an additional $160 million on electricity.
Energy use on Minnesota farms and production facilities varies
considerably depending on the type and size of the operation. For
dairy farms, electricity is the biggest energy cost, used for collecting and
cooling milk. Grain producers use significant amounts of diesel
fuel to plant and harvest their crops.
University of Minnesota Extension is researching ways to improve
on-farm energy efficiency. Several Extension faculty and staff have
recently become certified energy auditors through the Farm Energy
Auditor Training Program, and as part of the Clean Energy Resource
Teams (CERTs), Extension is working with utilities across the state to
design incentive programs that meet the needs of farmers.
We recommend these first steps for producers who want to lower
their energy use and costs:
Replace old equipment with energy-efficient models. For
example, consider replacing old livestock ventilation fans with more
energy-efficient fans. The USDA’s Rural Energy for America Program
(REAP) has seen great success in Minnesota by replacing old grain
driers with new, more energy-efficient models. In many cases, the
higher-efficiency equipment will be more expensive to purchase than
the less efficient option, but the lower operating costs of these more
efficient units can often provide a payback of those extra costs in the
first year.
Clean and maintain your equipment. In an average
mechanically ventilated livestock barn, cleaning and maintenance of
the shutters on the exhaust fans can result in energy savings of 40%.
Ask your energy supplier or utility about energy saving
programs. There are several available programs for which you may
qualify, through the utility or though the federal rural energy efficiency
programs such A REAP and USDA’s Environmental Quality Incentives
Program (EQIP). Some utilities also offer “off-peak” electric rates that
can be half the cost of standard rates. Get an energy audit. An
energy audit or assessment will tell you how much energy you’re using
and what part of your operation you should target for energy use
reduction. A list of farms that qualify is available through the
AFGC offices by contacting Ron Omann at (651) 602-7796 or
ron.omann@mn.usda.gov or through The Minnesota Project by
reaching Jake Fischer at (651) 789-3330 or jfischer@mnproject.org.
Local utilities can also refer farmers to energy auditors.
For more information about energy efficiency, visit

Ohio State Alfalfa Enterprise Budgets Online
Alfalfa hay and haylage are among the crops covered in the 2012
Farm Management Enterprise Budgets from Ohio State University
(OSU) Extension.
“One of the real benefits of using enterprise budgets is that they
help you to not forget expenses that should be included in the planning or
budgeting process,” says Dianne Shoemaker, OSU Extension’s
dairy financial management specialist. “The budgets don’t just look at cash,
or variable, expenses (seed, fertilizer, sprays and fuel). They also
take into consideration the overhead, or fixed, costs such as
charges for land, labor and management and machinery and
equipment.”
The OSU budgets are in a downloadable Excel spreadsheet
format. Users can input production and price levels to calculate farm-
specific numbers. Color-coded cells allow users to plug in numbers to
easily calculate bottom lines for different scenarios. Detailed footnotes
are included to help explain methodologies used to obtain the budget
numbers. Also included is a date in the upper right-hand corner of the
front page indicating when the last update occurred. (SOURCE: Hay
& Forage Grower, eHay Weekly, May 1, 2012)

The Diverse Structure and Organization of U.S. Beef
Cow-Calf Farms
ABSTRACT: Beef cow-calf production in the United States is
widespread, occurring in every state. Nearly 765,000 farms, about 35
percent of the 2.2 million farms in the United States, had a beef cow
inventory in 2007. Most of these were small, part-time operations.
About a third of farms that raise beef animals had a beef cow-calf
inventory of less than 10 cows, more than half had fewer than 20 cows, and
nearly 80 percent had fewer than 50 cows. In this study, Economic
Research Service (ERS) uses data from USDA’s 2008 Agricultural
Resource Management Survey for U.S. beef cow-calf operations to
examine the structure, costs, and characteristics of beef cow-calf
producers. Many small operations are “rural residence farms” that
specialize in beef cow-calf production, but their income from off-farm
sources exceeds that from the farm. Most beef cow-calf production
occurs on large farms, but cow-calf production is not the primary
enterprise on many of these farms. Findings suggest that operators of
beef cow-calf farms have a diverse set of goals for the cattle
enterprise.
For complete report go to www.ers.usda.gov or receive a paper
copy by calling 1-800-363-2068. (SOURCE: ERS USDA Economic
Information Bulletin #73. William D. McBride and Kenneth Mathews, Jr.)

Upcoming Events
JUL 10 Advanced Grazing School, C. Oran Little Research Center,
Versailles
SEP 6 KFGC Field Day, Hart County
SEP 27 UK Beef Bash, U.K. Research & Education Center, Princeton
OCT 30 Kentucky Grazing Conference, U.K. Research & Education
Center, Princeton
2013
FEB 21 33rd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Fayette County Extension
Office, Lexington
Garry D. Lacefield
Extension Forage Specialist
July 2012