COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE • UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY • COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE • LEXINGTON, KY, 40546

FORAGE NEWS

March 2012

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

KENNEDY ALFALFA CONFERENCE

The 32nd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference was held at the Cave City Convention Center on February 23, 2012. Participants visited exhibits and had the opportunity to bid on a large number of items at the Silent Auction. Speakers for the morning included, Dr. Garry Lacefield, Dr. Ray Smith, Mr. Tom Keene, Ms. Kim Field, Mr. Bill Talley, Ms. Beth Nelson and Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler. The keynote event was a farmer panel in the afternoon. Speakers included Mr. Clayton Geralds, Mr. Bill Payne and Mr. Charles Powell. Proceedings of the Conference will be posted on our website soon.

The next (33rd) Conference will be at the Fayette County Extension Office February 21, 2013.

KENNEDY ALFALFA AWARDS

Three awards were presented at the 32nd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference at the Cave City Convention Center on February 23, 2012. Each year the Kentucky Alfalfa Conference recognized outstanding contributions in the Public, and Private sectors and a leading producer. This years’ award recipients were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alfalfa Producer Award</th>
<th>Alfalfa Industry Award</th>
<th>Alfalfa Public Service Award</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mr. Don Moore</td>
<td>Dr. Mark McCaslin</td>
<td>Mr. Gene Olson</td>
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Congratulations Don, Mark and Gene.

ALFALFA HAY AWARDS

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture Hay Testing Program presented the 2011 Alfalfa and Alfalfa-grass quality awards at the 32nd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference in Cave City February 23, 2012. Winners were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alfalfa</th>
<th>Alfalfa -Grass</th>
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<tr>
<td>April John Page</td>
<td>April No producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May Kenny Humphrey</td>
<td>May Geralds Farms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June Geralds Farms</td>
<td>June Donald Reynolds</td>
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<tr>
<td>July John McCoy</td>
<td>July Geralds Farms</td>
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<tr>
<td>August John McCoy</td>
<td>August Geralds Farms</td>
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<tr>
<td>September Woodland Place Inc.</td>
<td>September Jerry Samples</td>
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<tr>
<td>October Dennis Wright</td>
<td>October Geralds Farms</td>
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Best Over: Champion Alfalfa Hay
John McCoy

KENNEDY GRAZING SCHOOL

The Spring Grazing School will be held at the UKREC in Princeton April 10-11, 2012. This two-day event will consist of classroom and field activities. For a detailed program, see our website.

The $50.00 registration fee includes all materials, grazing manual, breaks and two lunches. To register, contact Lyndsay Jones, 804 W.P. Garrigus Bldg., Lexington, KY 40546-0215, Phone 859-257-7521 or E-mail lyndsay.jone4@uky.edu

COOL SEASON GRASS WORKSHOP MAY 16th

The American Forage and Grassland Council is again offering the popular cool season grass professional workshop May 16 in Rogers, AR (the day before the AFGC annual tour). This workshop is for forage professionals to gain knowledge and expertise on cool season grass varieties and management. Industry representatives, county agents, NRCS specialists and top producers have all benefitted from this one day intensive training workshop. Full registration information and a detailed agenda can be found at www.afgc.org.

ATTEND THE AFGC SUMMER TOUR – MAY 17-18

Consider attending the American Forage and Grassland Council 1st annual National Tour in Rogers, Arkansas May 17-18. AFGC has decided to separate their field tour from the annual conference for the next three years. This allows a state forage council to work with AFGC board to put on a comprehensive forage tour and allows the AFGC board to focus on the annual national meeting. The Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council has planned an excellent tour; more details and registration information can be found at www.afgc.org.

SATURATED FAT AND CHOLESTEROL: HEALTH HAZARDS OR VITAL NUTRIENTS?

ABSTRACT: For more than thirty years public dietary policy has encouraged Americans to reduce their consumption of total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol. Since animal products are a significant source of these nutrients, the official advice has been to limit the consumption of animal products in general and red meat in particular. But this advice has not produced the benefits promised when “Dietary Goals for Americans” were released in 1977. An objective review of the research demonstrates that the scientific basis for these recommendations was weak at the time, and that it has not grown stronger. Despite these shortcomings, the 2010 version of “Dietary Guidelines for Americans” continues these recommendations. The rationale for reducing consumption of cholesterol and saturated fat is based upon the theory that this will reduce the incidence of obesity as well as heart disease, diabetes and other chronic metabolic diseases. The data, in fact, refutes this theory. Since the adoption of these dietary guidelines overall fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol consumption have decreased to near or below the targeted levels. Yet the proportion of obese Americans has doubled, the incidence of coronary heart disease has not diminished, and the number of Americans diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes has tripled.

In the 1960s the then-mainstream paradigm of the fattening carbohydrate was replaced with the unproven paradigm that dietary fat causes heart disease. Since then, however, science has continued to advance. Today an objective review of all the pertinent scientific literature regarding cholesterol reveals that: dietary cholesterol has no meaningful effect on total serum cholesterol levels; total serum cholesterol is unrelated to risk of Coronary Heart Disease; Low Density Lipoprotein cholesterol is at best, a marginal risk factor for Coronary Heart Disease; higher total serum cholesterol is associated with greater longevity for women and seniors; lower total serum cholesterol is associated with greater cancer mortality. A similar review of the scientific literature regarding saturated fat reveals that: saturated fat does not cause heart disease; a low fat diet increases Cardio-Vascular Disease risk factors; high fat diets produce greater weight loss, better blood glucose control, and reduced Cardio-Vascular Disease risks.

This subject should be of significant concern to members of the forage industry. Flawed dietary advice to limit consumption of animal products is, at best, harmful to our industry. At worst it is harmful to the public. In addition, these flawed concepts have contaminated other disciplines, including our own with ideas such as the promotion of the “healthfulness” of grass-fed beef due to its lower content of saturated fat and cholesterol. (SOURCE: Peter Ballerstedt, Forage Product Manager, Barenbrug USA IN AFGC Proceedings and Abstracts, Louisville, KY, January 2012)

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

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**DETERMINING THE EFFECT OF MOWING HEIGHT AND FERTILITY ON ORCHARDGRASS YIELD AND PERSISTENCE**

**ABSTRACT** - During the last 15 years farmers across the eastern U.S. have reported reduced survival of orchardgrass hay stands. Recent surveys and discussions with county agents and forage specialists suggest that close mowing heights using disc mowers may be a major factor causing orchardgrass stand decline. We designed an experiment in the spring of 2011 to determine the effect of mowing height and fertilizer rate on orchardgrass yield and persistence. A well managed orchardgrass hay field was subdivided into 6 x 20' plots with three cutting heights (1/2", 2", 4") and two fertility treatments in all combinations. The fertility treatments consisted of nitrogen (60 lbs/A) and potassium (100 lbs/A) applied after the 1st, 2nd, and 4th cuttings. Preliminary results showed a cutting height effect and a fertility effect even after the first two harvests. Orchardgrass stand persistence declined to less than 25% ground cover in all ½" cutting height treatments for both the control and fertility treatments. At the 2" cutting height the fertility treatment provided higher yield and stand persistence over the control and similar stand persistence to the 4" cutting height. Not surprising, the 4" cutting height with fertilizer produced the highest yields, but the 4" cutting height without fertilizer maintained an acceptable stand density. In summary, these results suggest that low cutting heights prevalent with disc mowers may be a primary reason for observed declines in orchardgrass stands.  
(SOURCE:  S. Ray Smith and Leah Saylor, Professor, University of Kentucky, and Senior Research Student, Asbury University, respectively IN AFGC Proceedings and Abstracts, Louisville, KY, January 2012)

**EXTENSION’S RESPONSE TO THE FESCUE ENDOPHYTE PROBLEM**

**ABSTRACT** - Fescue is grown on about two million acres in Arkansas and fescue toxicity causes millions of dollars in lost livestock production annually. Many producers don’t believe their livestock suffer from fescue toxicity, even though the animals exhibit common fescue toxicity behaviors. Extension efforts focused on improving producers’ knowledge so they can make informed decisions on managing fescue toxicity. Research in Arkansas focused on improving both animal management and forage management to reduce the problem. Studies included development of commercial novel endophytes, effect of fescue toxicity on breeding animals, stocker calves, and changes in toxin content of fescue hay. Surveys conducted with producers helped define attitudes toward toxic fescue and novel endophyte fescue. Information at field days and field demonstrations showed producers the process of converting toxic fescue fields to novel endophyte fescue. A regional conference showcased the state of current knowledge regarding the fescue endophyte and management strategies to lessen its impact on livestock production. An Extension publication was developed to answer many common questions about managing fescue and to outline recommended management strategies for spring and fall calving beef herds and for stocker calves grazing toxic fescue.  

**THE RELATIONSHIP OF YIELD AND DIGESTIBILITY IN COMMONLY USED SUMMER ANNUAL GRASSES**

**ABSTRACT** - Trials conducted at Virginia Tech’s Southern Piedmont Agricultural Research and Extension Center in 2009, 2010, and 2011, evaluated the yield and digestibility of summer annual grass varieties including conventional and BMR forage sorghums species and pearl millet. Plots were established in early June and harvested when the average height was 30 inches. Total yield was ranged from 4811 to 8289 lb DM/acre in 2009 and 3670 to 5297 lb DM/acre in 2010. Average over harvests, in vitro true digestibility also varied, ranging from 59 to 76% and 66 to 76% for the 2009 and 2010 growing seasons, respectively. What was most interesting is that the highest yielding variety in the trial was also one of the most digestible. This indicates that high yield and digestibility may not be mutually exclusively traits. To better understand how to use yield and digestibility data when selecting or recommending a summer annual grass species-variety, the difference from average for the yield and digestibility was graphed and the graph was divided into four quadrants. The upper right hand quadrant includes varieties that have above average yield and digestibility. These species-variety combinations would be the most desirable to include in a forage production system. In contrast, the bottom left hand quadrant contains species-variety combinations with below average yield and digestibility. These varieties would likely be the last choice for including in forage production programs.  
(SOURCE:  C. D. Teutsch, C. McCracken, and M. Northcutt, Virginia Tech, Blackstone and Advanta Seed, Hereford, TX, respectively IN AFGC Proceedings and Abstracts, Louisville, KY, January 2012)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

APR 10-11  Kentucky Grazing School, U.K. Research & Education Center, Princeton  

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