



FORAGE NEWS

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

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FREEZE AND FORAGES

IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE!!! In our last update April 17 (UK Forage Webpage), we began by relaying two importance observations: 1) Mother Nature Bats Last, and 2) Forage plants don't read our publications. Since then, we have seen reduced nitrate levels in wheat, new growth from crown and axillary buds on alfalfa, growth of grasses and clovers has rejuvenated and new seedlings have emerged and are growing. On Easter morning, after checking statewide low temperatures, I was expecting much worse. We have added some additional links on our Freeze Damage section on the Forage Website dealing with evaluation of wheat options and economics produced by Dr. Greg Halich, Agricultural Economics Department, University of Kentucky.

FORAGE FIELD DAY IN MONROE COUNTY

The Kentucky Forage and Grassland Field Day will be in Monroe County June 14, 2007 beginning at 4:00 CDT. Kevin Lyons, Ken Johnson, John Hagan and their committee have done an excellent job in organizing this event. The field day will begin at 4:00 with wagon tours covering a range of forage-livestock topics including: new innovations in forages, managing summer pastures, minerals for grazing cattle, grazing considerations for horses, managing pastures for goats, warm season grasses and economics of rotational grazing. Speakers for the stops include specialists from the University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University and the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

Our host farm is: John Hagan Farm, Gentry Circle Road, Mt. Hermon, Kentucky. See our website (www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage) for more details on the program and for directions to the farm.

GRAZING AND ALFALFA CONFERENCES

The 8th Kentucky Grazing Conference will be held at the Western Kentucky Expo Center in Bowling Green on October 25, 2007. Our 28th Kentucky Alfalfa Conference will be February 21, 2008 at the Cave City Convention Center. Programs are being prepared that will feature the latest information, exhibits, silent auction and awards. More details will be available on our website and in Forage News.

FORAGE TOUR SET FOR U.K. ALL COMMODITY FIELD DAY

The University of Kentucky All Commodity Field Day will be held July 26 at the University of Kentucky Research & Education Center in Princeton. This statewide field day truly has something for everyone interested in Kentucky Agriculture including: exhibits, tours, demonstrations, and youth activities. There will be approximately twenty tours running continuous throughout the day. The forage tour will have four stops:

Stop Topic & Speaker

- 1 Making Quality Hay and Reducing Storage Losses - Tom Keene
- 2 Teff and Other Summer Grasses - Tim Phillips
- 3 Roundup Ready Alfalfa – What Does the Future Hold? - Ray Smith
- 4 How do NEW Forage Varieties Perform in Kentucky? - Gene Olson

Tours will require approximately 1½ hour including stops and travel time. Each stop will last a maximum of 15 minutes including time for introduction, presentation and questions.

REMEMBER AFGC ANNUAL MEETING - JUNE 24-26, 2007

You still have time to register and make your plans to attend the AFGC meeting in Pennsylvania this June 24-26. The meeting is a great way to meet producers and industry leaders from around the country. Highlights of the meeting include a tour of forage agriculture in Central Pennsylvania and updates from forage researchers and extension specialists throughout the U.S. Go to www.afgc.org for registration information or simply call 1-800-944-AFGC.

If you want to ride with others to the meetings three county agents are taking producers from their area and one van is going from the University. If you are interested in riding in a van contact Dr. Ray Smith at raysmith1@uky.edu or 859-257-3358 for availability.

FINAL ALFALFA WEEVIL THOUGHTS - DON'T FORGET REGROWTH FEEDING

As an early spring insect, the weevil often faces erratic weather with major temperature swings and it can cope with them relatively well. Some eggs are laid in the fall but most are laid in the spring. While some of the larvae that hatched from fall-laid eggs may have been killed during the cold weather, those from spring-laid eggs have a good chance of survival.

A quick check before harvest can provide a tip-off to weevil status in the field, particularly the potential for damage to regrowth after harvest. Look for live larvae or loose cocoons of white silk in alfalfa tips at random locations over the field. Larvae or newly emerged weevil adults can feed on and slow regrowth. Larvae feed on buds while adults can chew extensively on the outer tissue of stems. There is not much information on treatment guidelines but 4 to 8 larvae per square foot may be enough to justify treatment. Check for normal bud development and plant growth about 4 to 5 days after the first cutting to see if weevils are at damaging levels. While routine stubble sprays are not needed, there are times when damage can occur. A spring like we have just experienced may be just the ticket for it. (SOURCE: Lee Townsend, UK Extension Entomologist)

MILK PRODUCTION

Kentucky milk production for February 2007 totaled 106 million pounds, down 3 percent from a year earlier and 7 percent from last month. Average number of cows on farms, at 93,000, was down 8,000 head from a year earlier, and unchanged from last month. Milk per cow averaged 1,140 pounds, up 60 pounds from last year, but down 90 pounds from last month.

Milk production in the **23 major States** during February totaled 13.1 billion pounds, up 0.9 percent from February 2006. January revised production, at 14.3 billion pounds, was up 1.8 percent from January 2006. The January revision represented an increase of 48 million pounds or 0.3 percent from last month's preliminary production estimate. Production per cow in the 23 major States averaged 1,586 pounds for February, no change from February 2006. The number of milk cows on farms in the 23 major States was 8.28 million head, 71,000 head more than February 2006, but 3,000 head less than January 2007. (SOURCE: *Kentucky Agri-News, Vol. #26, Issue #6, March 26, 2007*)

BARREN COUNTY CONTINUED AS CATTLE CAPITAL OF KENTUCKY

Barren County continued to have the largest number of cattle in **Kentucky** with 89,700 head on January 1, 2007. Warren was second with 69,800 head while Pulaski was third with 67,000 head. Kentucky ranked 11th in the nation with 2.46 million head, 3 percent above the previous year. All cattle and calves in the **U.S.** totaled 97.0 million head, up slightly from a year earlier. Texas had the largest cattle herd with 14.0 million head. Nebraska, Kansas, California and Oklahoma had cattle inventories of 5.00 million head or more on January 1, 2007.

Barren County also had the largest beef cow inventory in **Kentucky** with 39,000 head on January 1, 2007. Other top counties included Warren with 34,500 head and Pulaski with 34,200 head. Kentucky ranked 8th in the U.S. with 1.21 million head and had the largest beef cow herd east of the Mississippi River. There were 32.9 million beef cows in the **U.S.**, down slightly from January 1, 2006. Texas had 5.30 million beef cows, the largest inventory in the U.S. Other leading states included Missouri, Oklahoma, Nebraska and South Dakota. (SOURCE: *Kentucky Agri-News, Vol. #26, Issue #6, March 26, 2007*)

ARMYWORM COUNTS ON THE INCREASE AGAIN!

Now that the freeze and cold and windy weather of the last two weeks is over, the counts of armyworms in pheromone baited traps is going back up. The UK-IPM traps at Princeton captured 224 moths this week. This is a significant increase from last weeks 11 moths captured. In Lexington the turn around is not quite so dramatic; with twenty moths counted on April 20th compared to three last week. This is to be expected as in Lexington temperatures are usually cooler for a longer period of time than in Princeton.

The Princeton increase is significant as the 224 number is approaching the peak number of about 430 that was caught in 2006, a year which produced a know outbreak. We do not have historic numbers to compare to for Lexington. Never the less, if the counts continues up next week, essentially following the Princeton increases, I think we should definitely be on the lookout for this pest.

If you look at the graphics on the IPM web pages: <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/IPM/ipm.htm>, besides the increase and decrease in numbers you may also notice some differences in timing of things. 1.) At Princeton the 2007 population increase is later in the year than was the 2006 increase. This has likely occurred for two reasons. A.) This spring has overall been cooler than last spring, and B.) A delay caused by the sever freeze of April 6-9th. 2.) The counts in Lexington thought they will likely follow the same pattern as the Princeton counts, will occur somewhat later in the season. This occurs because temperatures in Lexington on the whole are cooler than those in Princeton. This is an example why calendar dates are not as useful in understanding insect population growth as is temperature. Temperature is the overriding factor in setting the rate of insect development whether your look at an individual insect or the development of a pest population.

My guess is that if the populations continue to climb we are likely to see damage to crops in Kentucky this year. Remember the insects we are counting now are moths. They are not the damaging stage. That will come later when there offspring, the caterpillars, are out. If you would like to review what happened last year, I invite you to review the articles predicting worm occurrence in 2006. They can be found on the Kentucky Pest News website at: <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/kpn/previous.htm>. On the opening page click on "Previous" then "2006 Index" then, review the armyworm articles in the April 10th, 17th and 24th and May 1st issues. You will see that by this time last year we are already seeing a few worms. Additionally, there were several reports of considerable infestations in central Kentucky.

If the counts are up again next week I will begin to employ a degree day model to predict the likely time frame for the occurrence of the damaging pests. At present a quick look indicates that given historic weather for eggs laid today (April 20th) the very first young worms could appear by 07 May. I can not rule out that caterpillars from early flying moth will be around before that but I think the very sever cold of Apr 6-9th probably controlled those insects.

In Kentucky the armyworm is a pest of corn, wheat (small grain) and pasture / hay grasses. Small grains will be a moot point this year. Corn, especially corn planted into standing small grains, could be an important target (See Risk of Planting Corn Into Standing Wheat KPN No.1123, April 16, 2007). However, in the last two outbreaks (2001 & 2006) the most often reported problem is in grass pastures / hay fields. (SOURCE: *Doug Johnson, UK Extension Entomologist*)

LOSSES OF ALFALFA DURING HARVEST

Operation	DM % lost	Leaves % lost
Mow/condition (RM,FR)	2	3
Raking @ 50% mc	3	5
Tedding @ 50% mc	3	5
Baling @ 20% mc	SmSqr	4
@ 18% mc	SmSqr	5
	Round	6
	Round	13
	Round	21
Total	9-21	14-34

Source: Ritt, R.E. 1990.

LOSSES FROM ALFALFA DURING HARVEST

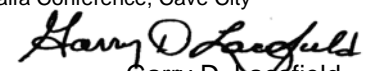
OPERATIONS

Operation	% of DM lost	% of leaves lost
Raking:		
at 70% moisture	2	2
at 60% moisture	2	3
at 50% moisture	3	5
at 33% moisture	7	12
at 20% moisture	12	21

Source: Pitt et al. 1990

UPCOMING EVENTS

- MAY 30-JUN 1 Southern Pasture & Forage Crop Improvement Conference, Tallahassee, FL
- JUN 14 KFGC Field Day, Monroe County
- JUN 24-27 American Forage & Grassland Council Annual Meeting, State College, PA
- JUL 26 UK All Commodity Field Day, UKREC, Princeton
- OCT 25 8th Kentucky Grazing Conference, WKU Expo Center, Bowling Green
- 2008**
- JAN 7-8 Heart of America Grazing Conference, Columbia, MO
- JAN 26-FEB 1 SRM/AFGC Forage Conference, Louisville
- FEB 21 28th Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City


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