



# FORAGE NEWS

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## November 2011

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

### BRENT WHITE IS KENTUCKY FORAGE SPOKESMAN



Brent White, a beef producer from Lyon County is the new "Kentucky Forage Spokesman". He received that honor at the 12<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference in Bowling Green October 13. Brent will represent Kentucky at the National Contest in January. Congratulations Brent!

### KFGC PRESENTS AWARDS



Four individuals were honored for "Excellent in Forages" during the Awards Ceremony at the 12<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Grazing Conference. Recipients were:

KFGC Grassroots Award – Buddy Smith  
KFGC Industry – Scott Cooper  
KFGC Public Service – County – Lyndall Harned  
KFGC Public Service – State – Gene Olson

Congratulations Buddy, Scott, Lyndall and Gene!

### KFGC NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT



Special thanks to the following individuals for their dedication and support to KFGC during their three year term(s) as a Director of the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council: Todd Clark, Daniel

Smith, Bryant Rogers, Jeff Medlin, Sid Brantly, Dan Grigson, and Steve Moore.

**Congratulations to the following individuals who were elected to the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council Board of Directors and will serve a three year term starting January 1, 2012.**

#### Industry:

John Seymour is President and co-owner of Roundstone Native Seed, LLC in Hart County.  
Bill Talley is President of Summit Seed Coatings.  
Bret Winsett is the South East Territory Manager for Byron Seeds.

#### Producer:

Clayton Gerald is a commercial hay producer from Hart County.  
Ken Johnson is a forage and beef producer from Monroe County.  
Bill Payne is a forage and livestock producer from Lincoln County.

#### Public:

Glen Aiken is a Research Animal Scientist/Agronomist with the USDA-ARS Forage-Animal Production Research Unit in Lexington.  
Traci Missun is the Oldham County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources.  
Jay Stone is the Christian County Extension Agent for Agriculture and Natural Resources.

(SOURCE: Don Sorrell, KFGC Nominating Committee)

### AFGC COMING TO LOUISVILLE



Kentucky will host the American Forage and Grassland Council's Annual Convention January 9-11, 2012 at the Crowne Plaza in Louisville. Join the American Forage and Grassland Council for the very best in education, exhibits and networking. You will hear relevant

presentations about forage production and utilization practices that will help you be more profitable. From the opening program to the closing session, you'll find activities and information designed to help you navigate today's forage and grassland environment. The Forage Spokesperson Competition, Forage Bowl, Emerging Scientist Competition, Photo Contest and more await you. For more information call 1-800-944-2342 or visit [www.afgc.org](http://www.afgc.org)!

### FORAGES AT KCA



Tall Fescue and the Endophyte will be the theme for our Forages at KCA on January 13, 2012. I extend a special

invitation to join us for this special conference covering Kentucky's most important grass as we look at its Past-Present and Future. The program begins at 1:00 and features five speakers:

- 1:15 Tall Fescue in Kentucky: The First 80 years- Garry Lacefield
- 1:45 Tall Fescue Varieties for the Future - Tim Phillips
- 2:15 Animal Performance on Endophyte Infected – Endophyte Free & Novel Endophyte Varieties - Glen Aiken
- 2:45 Horse Pastures: How much Tall Fescue is too much? - Ray Smith
- 3:15 Cost-Effective Endophyte Management Strategies - Don Ball
- 3:45 Discussion and Adjourn

Our keynote speaker is Dr. Don Ball, Professor Emeritus for Auburn University. Dr. Ball is internationally recognized for his work in Forages. He has been a leader in the Tall Fescue-Endophyte-Animal Relations area for over thirty years.

### SELLING & SHIPPING HAY TO TEXAS AND OTHER SOUTHERN TIER STATES



Several of you have inquired about the possibility of Kentucky farmers selling and shipping hay to Texas and other southern tier states to help in drought relief that has stricken that area for most all of 2011. Having just returned from the National Hay

Association Meeting and visiting with individuals from Texas, I thought I would put together a "punch list" of some of items that farmers should be aware of before shipping their hay.

1. Have your hay tested by the Kentucky Department of Agriculture before shipping hay and send test results with hay when it is shipped.
2. Weigh several bales prior to shipping so that you can guesstimate approximate weight that the truck can haul
3. Contact Texas Department of Agriculture for farmer contact information @ 1- 512-463-7476. Katherine Steele is in TDA's Communications wing.
4. The Texas Department of Agriculture has the Hay and Grazing Hot Line for buyers and sellers @ 1-877-429-1998. Website for the department is [www.tda.state.tx.us](http://www.tda.state.tx.us).
5. If possible, let the Texas farmer you are selling hay to arrange trucking.
6. Make sure hay is completely tarped from top to bottom and securely strapped for transportation.
7. Represent hay honestly and send boxed sample prior to shipment if requested.
8. Require a substantial deposit (or full payment) be sent prior to shipment of hay. This can be a deal breaker from both parties

standpoint. However, if you ship a load of hay to Texas (or any other state for that matter) and the receiver feels that he has not received the hay that he contracted for, how will you collect your money? How would you get the hay back to Kentucky?

9. I know of no hauling restrictions or limitations on hauling hay into Texas.

(SOURCE: Tom Keene, UK Hay Marketing Specialist)



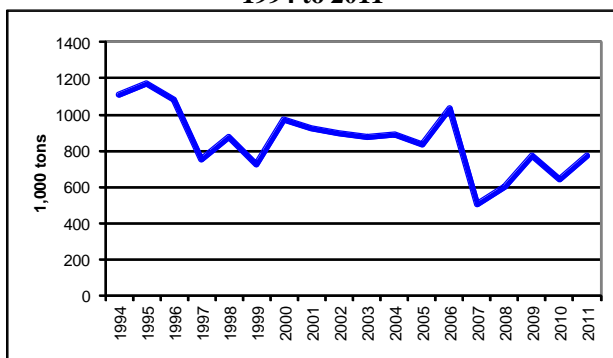
## HAY PRODUCTION CHANGES IN KENTUCKY

Kentucky typically harvests hay on around 2.5 million acres. The majority of Kentucky hay is grass hay produced and fed to cattle operations. Grass hay prices are usually pretty low and most is harvested into large roll bales and fed by the same operation. However, Kentucky also has a smaller, upper end hay market that primarily serves the equine and dairy sectors. As we move towards winter, it's probably worth taking quick look at Kentucky hay production estimates and trends for 2011, as some changes are worth noting.

In their August crop production report, USDA reported that Kentucky hay producers expect to harvest 2.1 million acres of non-alfalfa hay in 2011. This is down from 2.3 million acres in 2010, representing a decrease of more than 8%. Yield estimates at the time were placed at 2.3 tons per acre, up slightly from 2010. The decrease in acreage is most likely due to decreasing cattle numbers and competition for ground for corn and soybean production. Kentucky cattle numbers have decreased by more than 180,000 cows since January of 2007 and clearly much hay ground is being converted to row crops. It is also worth noting that, given the recent rains, yield estimates may increase as we look ahead to the October crop report.

In the same report, alfalfa and alfalfa mix acreage showed a much different pattern. Rather than decreasing, alfalfa acreage increased by 20,000 to 250,000 acres. This is the largest acreage estimate since 2007. The chart below depicts Kentucky's alfalfa hay production levels since the mid-1990's. The general downtrend is largely due to acreage trends and weather patterns. Also visible in the chart is the production low of 2007, which was primarily the result of the spring freeze and subsequent summer drought.

**Kentucky Alfalfa / Alfalfa Mix Production  
1994 to 2011**



There are several possible explanations for the increase in alfalfa and alfalfa mix acreage this year. First and foremost, alfalfa has always been a crop that is somewhat under the radar screen. As feed prices have increased, so has the value of quality hay. With cooperative weather, alfalfa has considerable profitability potential despite recent increases in production costs. This is especially true for producers with well established markets for high-quality square bales.

Secondly, establishment of new stands has been difficult over the last few years. While weather wasn't perfect in 2011, it certainly offered a decent opportunity to re-establish stands that had largely began to play out. Finally, the availability of Roundup Ready Alfalfa may have also played a role in the increase. This is a trend that I would expect to continue into 2012. (SOURCE: Kenny Burdine, UK Extension Agricultural Economist IN Economic and Policy Update, Vol. 11, No. 9, September 29, 2011)



## CLIMATE CHANGE EFFECTS ON FORAGE

### QUALITY OF KENTUCKY HAY FIELDS

**Abstract** - It is important to understand climate change effects on the forage quality of harvested hay because the quality of hay directly affects animal performance, which can result in altered profits for farmers. In this study, temperature and precipitation were manipulated in a hay field in order to create an environment representative of future predictions for Central Kentucky (+5.4°F above ambient temperatures and +30% precipitation over the long-term average rainfall). The objectives of this study were to determine the effects of climate treatments on the overall forage quality and the response of two species (red clover and crabgrass) across three harvest dates (June, July, and September 2009). The data indicate forage quality was best in hay harvested earlier in the growing season: the June harvest had a significantly higher quality than the September harvest. Overall, the climate treatments did not appear to affect forage quality of the experimental plots. However, the heat treatments improved the forage quality of red clover across all dates and had a similar effect on crabgrass but only in the July harvest. The results of this project demonstrate that a warmer climate may affect the forage quality of individual forage species but that these species-level responses are not yet detectable on a whole-field basis. (SOURCE: A.L. Cooke, G. B. Brosi, J.A. Nelson, & R. L. McCulley, IN 2011 AFGC Proceedings & Abstracts, French Lick, IN, June 13-15)

### BE ALERT TO HEALTH RISKS WHEN GRAZING TURNIPS



Grazing turnips during late fall and winter can be an option to extend grazing; however, like everything else, they can cause problems.

Turnip leaves can cause a blood mineral disease called hemolytic anemia, a brain disorder called polioencephalomalacia that is characterized by twitching and incoordination, pulmonary emphysema, which is a breathing disorder, and even bloat. These problems generally occur during the first couple weeks of grazing. Turnips also affect function of the thyroid gland and, thus, are goiter-genic.

Now this may all sound scary, but most problems are rare and are reduced or eliminated with careful management. To begin, don't shift cattle onto turnips suddenly. Adjust them by feeding high quality hay or pasture for a couple weeks before grazing turnips to prepare their rumen for the high energy and protein in turnips. Giving them just a few hours access to turnips at the start also helps. Make sure they have access to a dry roughage like corn stalks or a palatable hay. This also helps reduce diarrhea, which is common with turnips. Strip grazing that forces cattle to eat both roots and tops reduces problems and increases carrying capacity. And finally, always provide an iodized salt-trace mineral mix.

Many folks worry about choking. It's not very common but it does happen. Growers who have experienced this problem tell me that they usually can remove the plug using a stick or forcing their hand down the animal's throat. Not pleasant, but it works.

Don't be afraid to graze turnips; they're a wonderful resource. Just manage carefully and be alert so problems don't affect you. (SOURCE: Bruce Anderson, University of Nebraska)

### UPCOMING EVENTS

JAN 9-11 American Forage & Grassland Council Annual Conference, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Louisville  
JAN 13 Forages at KCA, Lexington  
FEB 23 32<sup>nd</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Cave City Convention Center, Cave City



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