



FORAGE NEWS

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

December 2012

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

FARM BUREAU FORAGE COMMODITY CONFERENCE



The 93rd Annual Meeting of the Kentucky Farm Bureau Federation will be held December 5-8, 2012 at the Galt House Hotel & Suites in Louisville. The Forage Commodity Conference will be held Thursday, December 6. Topics and speakers include: How I produce and manage Forages – Brent White, National Forage Spokesman; How to Stretch Short Hay Supplies – Dr. Jeff Lehmkuhler, University of Kentucky; and Prepare NOW for more and better pasture/hay in 2013. (Dr. Garry Lacefield)

AFGC WILL HOLD ITS ANNUAL MEETING THIS JANUARY IN KENTUCKY



NEWS RELEASE - Berea, Kentucky, November 11, 2012—The American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC) will host its Annual Meeting January 6-9, 2013 at the Marriott River Center in Covington, Kentucky.

The conference will feature symposia, offering extended content on specific topic areas; scientific posters; an outstanding exhibit hall representing seed, chemical, fencing and other industry companies and organizations; many networking opportunities; and several competitions such as the Forage Spokesperson, Emerging Scientist, Photo and Essay Contests.

According to executive director, Tina Bowling, "we are extremely fortunate to have the guidance of Dr. Ray Smith and the conference planning team. The foundation is in place for an outstanding 2013 event."

The conference opening session moderated by Dr. Garry Lacefield will focus on *Forage Research, Teaching, and Extension: Challenges and Opportunities* with presentations by key leaders from industry, education, producer and government perspectives. In addition, AFGC is proud to partner with Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) to provide workshops on *Forage Suitability Groups – The What, Why, How, When, and By Whom for Successful Development* and *Developing Grazing Plans with Contingency for Drought and Wildfire*.

There are over 60 educational opportunities over the two day conference, several networking opportunities and an exhibit hall with several industry representatives from seed to equipment. Educational sessions qualify for CEU credit in the Certified Forage and Grassland Professional designation program offered by AFGC.

Details and registration are available on the web at www.afgc.org. Or, contact AFGC at 1.800.944.2342 for information or questions.

The American Forage and Grassland Council is an organization made up of 21 affiliate councils with a total membership of about 2,500. Founded in 1944, its primary objective is to promote the profitable production and sustainable utilization of quality forage and grasslands. Contact AFGC, PO Box 867, Berea, KY 40403. Telephone 800.944.2342. Fax 859.623.8694. E-mail info@afgc.org. www.afgc.org. (SOURCE: Tina Bowling, 800.944.2342 or tina.bowling@afgc.org)

FORAGES AT KCA



Forages at KCA will feature three presentations including: Forages: Change-Challenge-Opportunities, Opportunities for Grassfed-beef in Kentucky and Beef: The REAL Health Food. The program will be

held in conjunction with the Kentucky Cattlemen's Convention Friday, January 11 beginning at 1:15 p.m. at the Lexington Convention Center.

KENTUCKY SMALL RUMINANT GRAZING CONFERENCE



The 2013 Kentucky Small Ruminant Grazing Conference will be held Saturday February 2 at Morehead State University Farm in Morehead, Kentucky. The program begins at 8:30 and concludes at 3:45 p.m. with an optional program to follow on FAMACHA Training lead by Dr. Michelle Arnold from the University of Kentucky. Topics to be included are: Economics/Marketing Update, Forage Management/Water Quality, Reproduction and Herd Health. The afternoon session will feature a Producer Panel. Registration is \$25.00 for the Conference and includes meal, breaks and materials. For additional details and directions, visit our website at <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/Small%20Ruminant%20Grazing%20Conference%202013.pdf>

HEART OF AMERICA GRAZING CONFERENCE



The 12th HOAGC will be held in Springfield, Missouri February 25-26 at the University Plaza Hotel. This year's Conference is being held in conjunction with the 29th Annual SW Missouri Spring Forage Conference with an expanded program, cutting edge topics and outstanding speakers. For program details and registration information visit our website <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/2013%20SFC-HofAm%20Registration-Agenda.pdf>

CHOOSE FORAGE VARIETIES WISELY



Many of you are in the planning process for seeding clovers, alfalfa and other selected forages this spring. Determining the best variety or varieties for your farm can make a critical difference in yield, persistence and profit. Each year the University of Kentucky Forage Variety team led by Mr. Gene Olson conducts a comprehensive Forage Variety Testing program in many locations across the state. This year's data is being summarized and will be available on our forage website and in hard copy soon. At present on our website we have several years of testing results covering the major forage crops grown in Kentucky. Last week I was on a National Program with Dr. Dan Undersander, Forage Specialist at the University of Wisconsin. Dr. Undersander has conducted alfalfa variety tests in that state since 1985. In his presentation he summarized data from 279 trials over the past twenty-six years in Wisconsin. The average yield difference between best and worst variety was 2.26 T/A, the minimum difference was 0.35 T/A and the maximum was 6.18 T/A.

HAY TESTING – A WISE INVESTMENT



The Kentucky Department of Agriculture has an excellent hay and haylage testing program. The program has been improved and expanded. A toll free call to the Kentucky Department of Agriculture Forage Testing Program 1-800-248-4628 will get quick results. A trained individual will come to your farm, take samples of your hay/haylage and get the test results back in a short period of time. The results can be used to accurately, efficiently and economically determine your feeding and

supplementation program. The cost is \$10.00 per "lot". A "lot" of hay/haylage is hay/haylage taken from the same harvest, the same field, same type of harvest conditions, and with the same method of storage and same weather conditions during harvest.

The testing program can also aid in marketing hay. When your hay is tested, you can list that hay for sale on the Department of Agriculture's computer hay listing service. There is no additional charge for the listing. If you want to buy hay, call the toll free number (1-800-248-4628) for a list of tested hay for sale in Kentucky.



ENERGY-CROP CALCULATOR AVAILABLE ONLINE

A new online calculator can help farmers determine breakeven costs for producing biomass from alternative feedstocks like miscanthus, switchgrass, mixed grasses and corn stover.

"It's an information dissemination tool," says Madhu Khanna, the University of Illinois ag economist who developed the [Feedstock Cost and Profitability \(FCAP\) Calculator](#).

"(It) allows farmers to put in their own parameters. They can customize the costs based on what their current farming operation looks like, what their current returns are on the land that they are thinking about converting, and learn what it would cost to grow an energy crop on it instead."

The calculator's initial version includes data for Illinois, Michigan and Oklahoma. Khanna plans to add more states after getting feedback from users. "We looked at poplar, miscanthus, switchgrass, prairie grass, and stover. They behave differently in different parts of the country, so this initial calculator shows the contrast between three very different climate and rainfall regions."

After selecting baseline crops they're currently farming, calculator users must provide specific expense, yield and input information. While corn and soybean growers have a wealth of information on standardized application rates and planting techniques, "these bioenergy crops are still very experimental," Khanna says. "We're still figuring out what the optimum rate of nitrogen application should be, the timing for harvest, and so on. This is based on a representative set of assumptions using our best knowledge to date."

The calculator includes costs for converting currently cropped and marginal lands. "Land cost is a significant part of the cost of producing energy crops. One reason for looking at marginal or less-productive cropland is to show that the cost of producing these energy crops is expected to be significantly lower on land that is less productive for growing row crops but could be used productively to grow energy crops." (SOURCE: *Hay & Forage Grower*, Nov. 6, 2012)



STRONG HAY PRICES THROUGH WINTER, MAYBE LONGER

Don't look for hay prices to fall off from currently high levels anytime soon, say analysts with the Livestock Marketing Information Center (LMIC) in Fort Collins, CO.

Prices "usually uptick" in the winter months, but finding [hay](#) this year will likely be much more difficult than it was last year, they reported in early November.

"Not only has the drought had a much larger impact area, but winter weather conditions last year were very mild, so hay disappearance was much smaller in 2011 than normal. National hay stocks are expected to be very low in the spring, and could be the smallest ever."

New Mexico had the highest average hay price among the 27 reporting states for the first 10 months of 2012, according to USDA's [Agricultural Prices](#), from which the analysts report. Nebraska saw the highest year-to-year increase – 70% – for the same time period.

North Dakota had the lowest average price, \$90/ton, during the first 10 months of the year. But prices there were still up by 43% over year-earlier levels. New York registered the smallest percentage increase, up 3%. (SOURCE: *Hay & Forage Grower*, Nov. 20, 2012)



DAIRY HERD EXPANSION UNLIKELY IN 2013

Profitability could improve in the U.S. dairy industry next year, but [dairy-cow](#) numbers will continue to decline, say analysts with USDA's Economic Research Service (ERS).

The size of the national dairy herd is expected to total 9.2 million cows this year and slip to just over 9.1 million cows in 2013, according to the ag department's November [Livestock, Dairy and Poultry Outlook](#). The decline is the result of "the profit squeeze experienced by producers this year."

ERS expects milk-per-cow production to average 21,880 lbs in the year ahead compared to an estimated 21,640 lbs this year. Total U.S. milk production in 2013 is expected to total 199.7 billion pounds, the same as that forecast for this year. (SOURCE: *Hay & Forage Grower*, Nov. 27, 2012)



WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT?

One of the activities I have enjoyed over the years is speaking at banquets and other "non-forage" events. Each year I put together a new program although I do recycle many of my favorite stories. My theme for the past two years has been "Gratitude and Patriotism – A Personal Perspective". During the presentation I talk about growing up in Ohio County, Kentucky, about traveling to many different countries and conclude that I as an American have taken many of the really important things for granted. I single out several and share more details. They include: Food, Farmers, Family, Friends, Faith and Freedom. Following a meeting last weekend a very special farmer friend shared that he also took these items for granted and like me was making a conscious effort to do better. He also reminded me of the Charles Schulz Philosophy that he heard me speak about at a previous banquet and I will leave you with it and best wishes for a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

The Charles Schulz Philosophy

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world.
2. Name the last five Heisman trophy winners.
3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America pageant.
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize.
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress.
6. Name the last decade's worth of World Series winners.

The point is none of us remember the headliners of yesterday. These are no second-rate achievers. They are the best in their fields. But the applause dies. Awards tarnish. Achievements are forgotten. Accolades and certificates are buried with their owners.

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school.
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time.
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile.
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special.
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with.

The lesson: The people who make a difference in your life are not the ones with the most credentials, the most money...or the most awards. They simply are the ones who care the most

UPCOMING EVENTS

2013

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| JAN 6-8 | AFGC Annual Conference, Marriott River Center Covington, KY |
| JAN 11 | Forages at KCA, KCA Annual Convention, Lexington Convention Center, Lexington |
| FEB 21 | 33 rd Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, Fayette County Extension Office, Lexington |
| FEB 25-26 | 29 th Annual SW Missouri Spring Forage Conference & 12 th Annual Heart of America Grazing Conference |



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