



# FORAGE NEWS

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## October 2013

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

### 14<sup>TH</sup> KENTUCKY GRAZING CONFERENCE – OCTOBER 10

Our 14<sup>th</sup> Conference will be on October 10 at the Fayette County Extension Office on Red Mile Road. The program begins at 8:00 with registration and the first presentation starts at 9:00. Topics and speakers include: Pastures: One of Kentucky's Untapped Resources – Dr. Jimmy Henning; Role of Legumes in Pasture Program – Dr. Garry Lacefield; The Role of Weed Control in Profitable Pastures – Dr. Scott Flynn; Pasture for Goats and Sheep – Mr. Greg Brann; Pastures for Horses – Dr. Robert Coleman; Can we Graze 300+ days? – Dr. Glen Aiken. The afternoon will conclude with our Forage Spokesman Contest. Registration fee is \$15.00 and covers all proceedings and all educational materials, breaks and meal. Pre-registration is NOT required, just pay at the door. For complete program see <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/14th%20Kentucky%20Grazing%20Conference%20Program%20columns.pdf>

### KENTUCKIANS ATTEND IGC

The 22<sup>nd</sup> International Grassland Congress was held in Sydney, Australia September 15-19. This International Forage Event is held every four years in a different Country. It was held in the USA (Lexington, Kentucky) in 1981. Twenty Kentuckians including 10 County Agents, 5 farmers, 4 U.K. faculty/staff and a teacher represented Kentucky. Prior to the Congress, the group toured agriculture related facilities including an 80,000 head beef operation, large sheep and dairy farms, hay farms and a world class horse farm. In addition, they visited the Great Barrier Reef. Several were featured on the program with reports, posters and committee activities. A highlight for us was the Farmer Forum where selected farmers from around the world were featured via video. We were honored to have our own Todd Clark (Fayette County farmer) featured. It was very special having Todd featured on video as well as present in the audience.

We will present a more "scenic" presentation at the Kentucky Alfalfa Conference in February of the trip.

### CLAYTON GERALDS ELECTED TO NATIONAL HAY ASSOCIATION BOARD

Mr. Clayton Gerald, Hay Producer from Hart County, was elected to the Board of Directors of the National Hay Association at the annual meeting in Salem, Oregon last month. Clayton is the first producer from Kentucky ever elected to this prestigious board. Clayton has been a featured speaker at two previous NHA meetings. We are so proud of Clayton and greatly appreciate him representing Kentucky at this National level. Congratulations and best wishes Clayton.

### NAFA's 2013 ALFALFA INTENSIVE TRAINING SEMINAR (AITS) – REGISTER TODAY!

One of the most successful programs available for training industry professionals about alfalfa growth and management will be presented in Denver, CO, **November 19-21, 2013** at the **Embassy Suites Denver International Airport**. Sponsored by NAFA, the **Alfalfa Intensive Training Seminar (AITS)** is a must for anyone growing or working with alfalfa including agronomists, sales managers, crop advisors, nutritionists, extension agents, and alfalfa growers.

A partial list of topics to be covered includes genetics, varieties, variety development, seed production; growth and development, soil fertility, irrigation and water use; harvest management, drying, and harvest aids; forage quality, sampling, and much, much more. Don't miss this great opportunity to increase your knowledge of all things alfalfa. For more information or to print the AITS brochure go to <http://www.alfalfa.org/training.html>

### PRUSSIC ACID POISONING AND FROST

Although prussic acid poisoning can occur anytime during the growing season, the greatest risk is usually associated with the first frost in Kentucky.

The primary cause of hydrocyanic (prussic) acid poisoning in domestic animals is the ingestion of plants containing this potent toxin. Cyanide-producing compounds (cyanogenic glucosides) occurring in living plant cells are converted to prussic acid when cells are crushed or otherwise ruptured.

The prussic acid potential of plants is affected by species and variety, weather, soil fertility and stage of plant growth. Plants of the sorghum group and leaves of wild cherry trees have a potential for producing toxic levels of prussic acid. There are wide differences among varieties. Some of the sudangrasses are low in prussic acid. Pearl millet is apparently free of prussic acid in toxic amounts.

The risk from potentially dangerous forages may be reduced by following certain management practices.

1. Graze sorghum or sorghum cross plants only when they are at least 15 inches tall.
2. Do not graze plants during and shortly after drought periods when growth is severely reduced.
3. Do not graze wilted plants or plants with young tillers.
4. **Do not graze for two weeks after a non-killing frost.**
5. **Do not graze after a killing frost until plant material is dry (the toxin is usually dissipated within 48 hours).**
6. **Do not graze at night when frost is likely.**
7. Delay feeding silage 6 to 8 weeks following ensiling.
8. Do not allow access to wild cherry leaves whether they are wilted or not. After storms always check pastures for fallen limbs.

For more information on Prussic Acid Poisoning, along with other Forage-Related Disorders, stop by your County Extension Office and get a copy of ASC-57.

### AFGC TO MEET IN MEMPHIS

The American Forage & Grassland Council will hold their annual meeting in Memphis, TN January 12-14, 2014. The past two conferences were held in Kentucky. The program committee has put together an outstanding program with something for all interested in Forage-Livestock Agriculture including paper and poster presentations, Forage Spokesman, Young Scientist competition, Forage Bowl, Exhibits, Silent Auction and Awards Banquet. To learn more about the Conference, visit [www.afgc.org](http://www.afgc.org), e-mail [info@afgc.org](mailto:info@afgc.org) or call 800-944-2342. Register for one-day or all three by calling, e-mailing or on-line at [www.afgc.org](http://www.afgc.org).

## NEW RESEARCH LEADER, FORAGE-ANIMAL PRODUCTION RESEARCH UNIT, LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY ANNOUNCED

I am pleased to announce the selection of Dr. Glen Aiken, Research Animal Scientist, as the Research Leader of the Forage-Animal Production Research Unit (FAPRU), Lexington, KY. He completed his B.S. in Dairy Science at Texas A&M University, M.S. in Animal Science at Texas A&M University, and Ph.D. in Agronomy at University of Florida.

Dr. Aiken joined ARS in 1992 as a GS-12 Research Agronomist at Booneville, AR. He was one of the first employees hired when the Forage-Animal Production Unit was established in Lexington in 2003. Dr. Aiken has authored or co-authored 172 publications (75 refereed journal articles) and made numerous presentations at regional, national, and international meetings. He particularly is recognized for his research using ultrasound technology to study nutritional influences on cattle body composition and condition; use of Doppler ultrasonography to investigate alkaloid effects on blood flow in cattle exhibiting fescue toxicosis; and in combining animal weight gain and physiology data.

Dr. Aiken is highly sought by cattlemen associations to present his research on grazing management. He has received awards for his research from the Southern Branch of the American Society of Agronomy, American Forage and Grassland Council, and the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council. He is a Fellow in the American Society of Agronomy and Crop Science. In 2009 he was awarded a Fellowship for travel and expenses to New Zealand.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Aiken to this leadership position. (SOURCE: August 23, 2013 News Release by Edgar G. King, Area Director, USDA Mid-South Area Office)

## NRCS TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDER PROGRAM

Progressive graziers and forage managers are continually looking to improve their operations' productivity. The opportunity exists to have a Grazing Management Plan developed for your operation at little or no cost to you. By contacting your county NRCS office, you can apply to have this plan developed by a Technical Service Provider, an independent professional certified by NRCS.

Some background: like some other federal and state agencies, the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), has faced significant reductions in its funding, while seeing an ever increasing workload. To help meet the demand for its services, the 2002 Farm Bill authorized the use of Technical Service Providers (TSP). TSPs are private individuals or businesses who have demonstrated professional skill and experience in a certain area of practice. The 2008 Farm Bill required national standards for TSP certification. The bill designated specialty organizations who would be tasked to set standards and certification procedures for professionals in their areas. The American Forage and Grassland Council was designated to certify those whose training and experience qualified them for the "Certified Forage and Grassland Professional" (CFGP) accreditation.

Those holding the CFGP designation could seek further certification with NRCS in order to become qualified to develop Conservation Activity Plans (CAP). The 2008 Farm Bill also created a list of sixteen of these CAPs ranging from Grazing Management Plans to plans for Forestry, Nutrient Management and Irrigation among others.

The EQIP program authorizes funding to pay for these Grazing Management Plans. Only TSPs are authorized to develop these plans. By working with a TSP to develop one of these plans for your operation, you gain additional ideas for increasing forage production and more fully utilizing that production through grazing livestock. Additionally, potential resource concerns may be addressed. The producer may also increase the possibility of getting funding for the implementation of needed conservation practices.

If you are interested in taking your forage production to new levels, see your local NRCS office for details.

## HISTORIC AGRICULTURAL DATA NOW ONLINE

In early July, the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) simplified access to historic data by putting 77 years' worth of [agricultural statistics](#) online. In the past, this information, published in the annual bulletin Agricultural Statistics, was available in print form only.

"U.S. agriculture continues to progress by learning from our past, which is why it is imperative to have historic data easily available," said

Dr. Cynthia Clark, NASS administrator. "By publishing this information online we are simplifying the research process and further enhancing access to this important and interesting information."

NASS and its predecessors at USDA have published Agricultural Statistics since 1936. The bulletins are a compilation of data produced by multiple agencies within USDA.

Each volume is a one-stop location for annual production, consumption, trade and price data for all sorts of crops and livestock, as well as farm economics, spending for government programs and lots of other statistics important to our country's agricultural system.

These volumes detail U.S. farming for much of the 20th century, including the Dust Bowl and World War II. While digitizing these past data, NASS statisticians uncovered historical facts, including:

- In 1933, hybrid corn seeds made up only one-tenth of 1 percent of the national crop. Within 10 years, that proportion reached 50 percent, and by 1956, more than 90 percent of the national corn crop was from hybrid seeds.
- Iowa harvested 2.36 billion bushels of corn in 2011, more than the entire U.S. corn harvest of 1935.
- Once staples of American farms, horse and mule populations fell from 18.7 million in 1930 to 3.1 million in 1960, after which the statistic was discontinued.

"Whether you need them for research or are just curious about our country's farming history, these historic volumes are a valuable addition to the official statistical literature available to the public," Clark said. (*Progressive Forage Grower Wednesday, 31 July 2013 — From NASS news release*)

## MOBILE APP TRANSLATES PER-BALE TO PER-TON PRICE

Using app, horse owners can figure most economical buys

If you sell hay to the horse market, you might want to let your customers know about a recently released mobile phone app. It translates a per-bale price into a per-ton price.

The Hay Price Calculator application was developed by University of Minnesota Extension equine specialist Krishona Martinson in cooperation with researchers from around the country.

Many horse owners buy hay by the bale, she says. But, in many cases, buying and comparing different hay types by calculating a per-ton price is probably more economical.

"Buying by the bale can make it difficult to compare prices between and within bale types," Martinson says. "A \$4 small-square bale that weighs 35 lbs actually costs more per ton than a \$5 bale that weighs 50 lbs, for example."

Horse owners can use the app to calculate per-ton prices for small-square, large-square and round bales of hay and other feedstuffs, like cornstalks and straw. Hay buyers must know the weights of bales to use the app accurately. It does not take nutritive values into account, she adds. "Ideally, the app will be used to compare prices of hay with similar forage nutritive values," she says. (SOURCE: *Hay & Forage Growers, eHay Weekly - August 27, 2013*)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

OCT 10 Kentucky Grazing Conference, Fayette County Extension Office, Lexington

### 2014

JAN 12-14 AFGC Conference, Memphis, TN  
JAN 13 AFGC Dow Pasture Symposium, Memphis, TN  
JAN 15-18 Kentucky Cattlemen's Association Convention, Lexington  
JAN 17 Forages at KCA, Lexington  
FEB 1 Kentucky Small Ruminant Grazing Conference, Lexington  
FEB 4-7 NCBA, Nashville, TN  
FEB 20 34<sup>th</sup> Kentucky Alfalfa Conference, WKU Expo Center, Bowling Green

  
Garry D. Lacefield  
Extension Forage Specialist  
October 2013

**"Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember.  
Involve me and I learn."**

**—L.M. Montgomery: Canadian author**