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Forage News

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## Forage News [2014-01]

Department of Plant and Soil Sciences, University of Kentucky

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# FORAGE NEWS

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

**January 2014**

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

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**

## GRAZING, HEALTH & ANIMAL RIGHTS

Our nineteenth consecutive Forages at KCA will be held from 2:00 – 4:00 on January 17, 2014. Our program theme is "Grazing – Health and Animal Rights". Speakers include Dr. Garry Lacefield and Dr. Roy Burris from the University of Kentucky and back by popular demand will be the keynote speaker Dr. Peter Ballerstedt.

### Theme: Grazing, Health and Animal Rights

- 2:00 Welcome – Dr. Garry Lacefield
- 2:10 Grazing: More Important Now than Ever! - Dr. Garry Lacefield
- 2:30 Animal Rights – Animal Welfare: Protecting Animals OR A Threat to US Food Production and Our Way of Life? - Dr. Roy Burris
- 3:00 Red Meat and Our Health: Separating Scientific Fact from Politics, Emotion, and Misinformation - Dr. Peter Ballerstedt
- 3:45 Discussion
- 4:00 Adjourn

## FORAGE WORKERS HEADING FOR MEMPHIS

The American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Convention will begin their weekend (January 12-14) IN Memphis, Tennessee. The very practical and program will include the latest research, industry exhibits, Forage Spokesman, Young Scientist, Awards, Silent Auction and more. For details see the AFGC website: [www.afgc.org](http://www.afgc.org).

## FORAGE VARIETY REPORTS NOW AVAILABLE

My thanks to Mr. Gene Olsen for all his hard work in getting our 2013 Forage Variety tests harvested, summarized and published. Reports are now available on our website at <http://www.uky.edu/Ag/Forage/>.

## HEART OF AMERICA GRAZING CONFERENCE WILL HELP

### PRODUCERS IMPROVE FORAGES

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. - Livestock producers, Extension educators and agribusiness professionals from around the Midwest interested in improving forages and pasture productivity should attend the Heart of America Grazing Conference Jan. 20-21.

The conference will be at the Clarion Hotel, 2480 Jonathan Moore Pike, Columbus, Ind. The conference, now in its 13<sup>th</sup> year, rotates among Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri and Ohio and features speakers from many states.

Jason Tower, Southern Indiana Purdue Agricultural Center superintendent, said the conference will highlight improved grazing management techniques and how producers can improve bottom lines and animal performance.

"Anytime we can have our animals grazing more days out of the year, it saves money and helps increase overall profitability, and it can also provide better feed quality for the animal," Tower said.

The conference will kick off with an evening program and tradeshow on Jan. 20. Purdue Extension forage specialist [Keith Johnson](#) will discuss Indiana's forage industry and contributions that are based in Indiana.

"The amount of pasture growth in late summer and into early fall is not as much as we would have liked it to have been," he said.

"Individuals who were careful about not overgrazing will benefit next spring."

Johnson said pastures that were overgrazed the last couple years would have more stress and less productivity in the coming year. On Jan. 21, sessions will run from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. and cover soil health, invasive species woodlot grazing with goats and forage-finished versus grain-finished beef.

Registration is \$65 per person for both days and \$55 for an additional person from the same farm. One-day registration is \$40 and \$35 for a second person. Meals are included. After Dec. 20, full registration is \$75 and one-day registration is \$50. Meals are not guaranteed for those who register after Jan. 13.

Checks should be made payable to the Indiana Forage Council. Registration forms can be downloaded at <https://ag.purdue.edu/agry/extension/Pages/grazing.aspx>. Registration and payment should be sent to the Indiana Forage Council, c/o Keith Johnson, 915 W. State St., West Lafayette, IN 47907-2054.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the hotel with a rate of \$84. Contact the Clarion Inn at 812-372-1541 by Dec. 20 and mention the Heart of America Grazing Conference to receive the discounted rate.

In addition to Purdue University Extension, conference sponsors are the Indiana Forage Council, Missouri Forage and Grassland Council, Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, The Ohio State University Extension, University of Illinois Extension, University of Kentucky Extension, University of Missouri Extension, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service and Indiana's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program. (SOURCE: *Amanda Gee, Purdue University, Ag Answers 12-5-2013*)

## DUGGER BRINGS COTTON COUNCIL EXPERIENCE TO NATIONAL HAY ASSOCIATION

### New executive director to start with New Year

The [National Hay Association](#) (NHA) will gain a wealth of trade association and membership services knowledge when its new executive director comes on board in January.

Paul Dugger, Nashville, TN, will take on the role being vacated by Don Kieffer, who will retire next month.

Dugger, recently a New Holland Agriculture hay and forage specialist, spent the bulk of his career with the National Cotton Council. He served as its Cotton Foundation assistant executive director, in charge of the day-to-day management of the research and education foundation, and was manager of special technical projects. Dugger coordinated the annual Beltwide Cotton Conferences and helped grow council and foundation membership.

Membership, he says, is the first thing NHA's board would like him to focus on. "I take that to mean expansion of membership. To do that, you've got to have good membership services and clearly articulated benefits for members."

When he comes on board, Dugger will assess and identify those benefits and hopes to make improvements where needed. He wants to utilize the group's industry partners and current members in an ongoing recruitment campaign. The association currently consists of 450 members. (SOURCE: *eHay Weekly, November 26, 2013*)

## BERMUDAGRASS STEM MAGGOT FOUND IN ALLEN COUNTY

The bermudagrass stem maggot was found in three Allen County bermudagrass hayfields this year. It was discovered in Georgia in 2010. Native to Japan, Indonesia, India, and Hawaii, this small fly has spread rapidly across the Southeast, causing yield and quality losses in bermudagrass pastures and hayfields. Damage varies with the growth stage of the grass; numbers of flies present, which increases during the summer; and drought stress.

Maggots hatching from eggs laid on the plants attack at a node. Feeding kills leaf blades beyond the damaged area; the lower leaves stay green.

**Figure 1. Yellowed bermudagrass stems caused by bermudagrass stem maggot. Infested fields have a frosted appearance.**



**Figure 2. Close-up of infested stem. The maggot usually leaves the stem before the terminal turns yellow.**



**Figure 3. Split infested stem showing shredded tissue and waste material produced by the maggot.**



**Figure 4. Bermudagrass stem maggot flies are about 1/8-inch long. The thorax is light gray; the abdomen is yellow with some distinct dark spots.**



Research is underway to evaluate management options. While the acreage of bermudagrass grown for hay in Kentucky is small, growers should be watching for this insect in 2014. A sweep net is the best tool to use to check fields efficiently.

Information on management of this insect is available at - <http://www.aces.edu/pubs/docs/A/ANR-1462/ANR-1462.pdf> (SOURCE: Lee Townsend, Extension Entomologist and Steve Osborne, Allen County Agent for Agriculture & Natural Resources)

## FARMLAND VALUE REACHES HISTORIC \$8,716 STATEWIDE AVERAGE

AMES, Iowa — Average Iowa farmland value is estimated to be \$8,716 per acre, an increase of 5.1 percent from 2012, according to results of the Iowa Land Value Survey conducted in November. Values increased in 2013 for the fourth year in a row and achieved historic peaks. The increase is similar to results of other recent Iowa farmland value surveys, including the [Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago](#) and the [Iowa Chapter of the Realtors Land Institute](#) surveys. (SOURCE: Michael Duffy, Ann Johanns, Willy Klein, Iowa State University)

## FARMER-TO-FARMER MENTORING - DELIVERING REAL CHANGE IN PRACTICE ON UK LIVESTOCK FARMS

A pilot project was set up whereby mid-performing livestock producers could access knowledge from other farmers in order to produce more milk and meat from grass. In the United Kingdom grass utilisation on pasture that is grazed, is low - generally no better than 50% on dairy units, and even less on beef and sheep farms. The BGS Grazing Partners scheme was devised by the British Grassland Society (BGS) in 2009 by council member Sara Gregson, after completing a Nuffield Farming Scholarship. Eighteen experienced and successful grassland farmers were trained in mentoring skills. Farmer-to-farmer mentoring helps producers, who are too shy to join a discussion group, do not have time to attend meetings, or find searching for printed information and applying it to their own situation, difficult. The conversation between mentor and mentee is completely relevant to the latter's farm, so uptake of new technology is more likely than for example, visiting a demonstration farm or reading a press article. Sixty-five mentoring partnerships were formed. Feedback from mentees was all positive. They saved money on inputs and increased grass and animal productivity as a result of their mentor's input. BGS Grazing Partners gave mid-performing operators knowledge and confidence to make practical changes to their grassland management. This allowed them to reduce their costs of production and improve profitability. It also taps into a previously un-used knowledge resource - namely farmers, at a time when grassland experts are scarce, yet the need for grassland knowledge transfer is high. (SOURCE: Sara J Gregson The British Grassland Society, Unit 32C, Abbey Park, Stareton, Kenilworth, Warwickshire, IN 2013 Proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Grassland Congress)

## NOVEL APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING ON-FARM BIOMASS PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Energy security and climate change are issues facing many countries today. Finding clean, renewable fuel sources has provided a challenge to look beyond the obvious and search for new ways to use old resources. Switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum* L.) is a warm season grass native to many parts of the United States. In 2007, the University of Kentucky (UK) College Of Agriculture started a collaborative project with the UK Cooperative Extension, farmers in northern Kentucky, Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council and East Kentucky Power Cooperative to explore and demonstrate how switchgrass can be grown, harvested and utilized in an economical and environmentally friendly way. This pilot project was funded by the KY Agricultural Development Fund and successfully established 60 ha of switchgrass between 2007-2011 and produced >500 t of biomass that was combusted for electricity production.

Switchgrass was chosen as the biomass crop of choice for this area for a variety of reasons. It can be grown on marginal soils that are not well suited to row crops. It produces high yields with relatively low inputs and can be harvested with equipment that is common on typical US farms. Because it is a native grass, there is little concern of it becoming invasive and it provides wildlife habitat for local animal species. Additionally, when harvested at a vegetative stage, it produces high quality forage.

Switchgrass is a useful biomass crop in northern KY. It performs well on the marginal soils, has the potential to produce returns on investment and can serve as summer grazing or hay for cattle until the biomass market develops. Briquetting material on-farm has the potential to allow producers to add value of the product, reduces transportation cost and allows for simple integration into coal burning power plants. (SOURCE: S Ray Smith, Thomas Keene, Lee Carol Greenwell and Krista Cotton, University of Kentucky, IN 2013 Proceedings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> International Grassland Congress)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

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. Larefield  
 Extension Forage Specialist  
 January 2014

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

—L.M. Montgomery: Canadian author