



Forage News

Keeping Forage-Livestock Producers in Kentucky Informed

Dr. Ray Smith and Echo Gotsick, MS editors

March 2025

See KY Forages YouTube for recordings of KY Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference

All the presentations from the recent KY Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference are now at the KYForages YouTube channel. These include the very informative producer panel where Brad Hines, Kevin Priddy and Allen Arthur shared how they produce timothy, orchardgrass and teff hay. Another presenter was long-time alfalfa breeder Dr. Don Miller from Idaho sharing about "What's New in Alfalfa Varieties." Other presentations included: Everything I Ever Needed to Know about Armyworms, Armyworm Control Methods: What to spray and when, , What do Horse Owners Want and Why, What We Can Learn from the Results of the KY Hay Contests, and Emerging Markets for Unique Forage Species. Google KYForages YouTube to view the recorded presentations or use the direct link <https://www.youtube.com/c/KYForages> . If you click on Playlists you can see this conference and all the other forage conferences that Dr. Teutsch has recorded over the last 10 years.

Congrats to 2025 Alfalfa Award Winners

We want to congratulate all the 2025 Alfalfa Award winners that were announced at the recent Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference. Joanna Coles won the Lacefield Public sector award for her outstanding leadership across many areas as county agent in Warren county, and especially with forage crops. Kevin Priddy of Grayson county won the Schnitzler Producer Award recognizing his production expertise and his willingness to share with other farmers. Kevin was one of the producer speakers at the 2025 conference. Brett Reese, agronomist at the Paris Southern State Coop, won the Thompson industry award. We also want to recognize Brett for his years of service on the KFGC board, most recently as KFGC President 2021-2022, and for speaking at this year's conference.

Join/ Renew KFGC Membership

We encourage you to show your support for Forage/Livestock agriculture in Kentucky and join the Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council. A bonus to joining KFGC is an automatic membership to the American Forage and Grassland Council. A great two for one value for only \$25. If you are already a KFGC member, then I encourage you to renew your membership today.

Forage Timely Tips: March

- ✓ Sign up for a KY Grazing or Fencing School
- ✓ Continue pasture renovation by no-tilling seeding legumes.
- ✓ Place small seed at 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep and check depth several times during planting; slow down for more precise seeding.
- ✓ Continue feeding hay until adequate forage exists in the pasture for grazing
- ✓ Spring seeding of grasses should be done in early to mid-March (but fall is preferred)
- ✓ Begin smoothing and re-seeding hay feeding and heavy traffic areas
- ✓ Graze pastures overseeded with clover to reduce competition from existing grasses but pull off before grazing new clover plants.
- ✓ Provide free choice high-magnesium mineral to prevent grass tetany on lush spring growth.
- ✓ Early March is an ideal time to control many broadleaf weeds including: buttercup, poison hemlock, chicory, dock, and biennial thistles.

The easiest way is to go to AFGC.org, then click on Membership and Join/Renew Now. Make sure you join as an Affiliate Member of Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council. If you want to mail in your membership then write a check payable to KFGC for \$25 and mail to our KFGC Treasurer: Caroline Roper, UKREC, PO Box 469, Princeton, KY 42445. Make sure to include your name, address, phone, and email with your check.

Pub of the Month: Broadleaf Weeds of Kentucky Pastures AGR-207

One of the most comprehensive yet concise weed publications in the country is Dr. J.D. Green's 2 page publication "Broadleaf Weeds of KY Pastures." Dr. Green made sure to update this pub before retiring last summer. One side has photos of the major weeds and the other side lists the weeds with the products that are most effective controlling them. He also indicates the time of the year that's best to spray. And early March is the best time for many problem weeds like buttercup and poison hemlock. Dr. Green even included a rating of how effective mowing is to control certain weeds. Go to this pub on the Forage Website or the direct link is <http://>

www2.ca.uky.edu/agc/pubs/AGR/AGR207/AGR207.pdf

For a more detailed weed control publication, including information on each product, withholding periods and application rates, go to “Weed Management in Grass Pastures, Hayfields, and Other Farmstead Sites AGR-172”. Direct link <https://weedscience.ca.uky.edu/sites/weedscience.ca.uky.edu/files/agr172.pdf>



UK Spring Fencing Schools April 22nd and 24th

Poet Robert Frost said “fences make good neighbors.” Considering good fences mark clear boundaries, keep livestock contained and create a clean aesthetic, he was probably right. Farmers who know how to build and maintain a good fence add value to their farm and protect their assets. The University of Kentucky is hosting two spring fencing schools to give farmers the most up-to-date information on fencing techniques and construction.

“This year, we will focus on how to construct both fixed knot woven wire and smooth electrified high tensile fencing,” said Dr. Chris Teutsch, forage extension specialist with the University of KY. “We plan to emphasize properly constructing H-braces, which are key components of all fencing systems. Our goal is to help farmers learn the basics of building a strong, durable fence that will last a couple decades or more. If they choose to hire someone else to build fences, we want them to know what a well-constructed fence looks like.”

The 2025 spring schools will occur April 22 in Owensboro and April 24 in Tompkinsville. The schools will run from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. local time. Each school is limited to 30 participants so register soon. The cost is \$35 per person. This cost covers lunch, a fencing notebook and safety gear. Participants should bring leather gloves for the hands-on portion of the school. Go to the Forage Website under Events for more information and to register or go to the direct links.

For the Owensboro school at <https://2025FencingDavies.eventbrite.com>, and the Tompkinsville school at <https://2025FencingMonroe.eventbrite.com>.

2025 Kentucky Beginning Grazing School April 29-30

The 2025 Kentucky Beginning Grazing

see blue.

School's goal is to help livestock producers improve profitability with hands-on and classroom learning. The school is April 29-30 at the Logan County Extension office in Russellville and features updated curriculum. “While this school targets beginning graziers, the topics and discussion will benefit producers along all segments of their grazing journey” says Chris Teutsch, UK Forage Specialist and grazing school organizer. This year's school has been updated to put greater emphasis on soils which are the foundation upon which sustainable grazing systems are built.”

Topics on April 29 include introduction to soils, rotational grazing, meeting nutritional needs on pasture, grazing math concepts, travel to a local grazing operation, portable/seasonal water systems, methods to access pasture production and determine stocking rate, hands-on small paddock set-up demonstrations.

Topics for April 30 include fence types and costs, electric fencing for serious graziers, a grazing system design case study and exercise, and a discussion on how to reinvigorate a rundown farm. A local producer will discuss how they make grazing work on their farm. Students will also have the opportunity to calibrate a grain drill and try a GPS unit designed for frost seeding pastures.

The school will begin at 7:30 a.m. CDT each day and will adjourn at 4 p.m. CDT. Lunch will be provided and the course will include both field and classroom work, so be sure to dress appropriately. To register, go to the UK Forage Website under events or the direct link <https://Spring2025GrazingSchool.eventbrite.com>. Limited registration is \$60 per participant and ends April 15. To register by mail, send a check made out to KFGC to Caroline Roper, UK Research and Education Center, PO Box 469, Princeton, KY 42445.

Hay Prices as of mid-February 2025

See the chart below recent alfalfa USDA compiled national hay prices as reported in eHay Weekly. Go to their website <https://hayandforage.com/> for more articles and to see the current grass hay prices. Export constriction is starting to affect prices and may translate to lower prices locally unless you are producing premium hay. Sign up at the above link for the free online or print publication Hay and Forage Grower.

Alfalfa hay prices reported to USDA from selected states.			
Location	Forage Quality Grade		
	Premium+	Good	Fair
	\$ per ton		
Arizona	170-260	150-175	N/A
California	180-240	150-190	110-150
Colorado	215(d)-220(d)	200(d)	125
Idaho	190	130-150	130
Iowa	120-260	110-155	85-108
Kansas	160(d)-290	120-180	80-120
Minnesota	80-295	60-205	50-155
Missouri	200-300	150-200	125-150
Montana	200-215	125	100-110
Nebraska	N/A	80-100	N/A
New Mexico	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oklahoma	165-200(d)	130-200(d)	130-135
Oregon	250-255	150	N/A
Pennsylvania	290-365	240-305	N/A
South Dakota	70-250	N/A	N/A
Texas	250(d)-360	230(d)-270(d)	235(d)
Utah	210-250	150	120-140(d)
Washington	N/A	145-160	N/A
Wisconsin	N/A	135-180	105-115
Wyoming	240-270	163(d)	N/A

What We Can Learn from Others

Recently I found an article I had written for KCA's Cow Country News in April 2016 after a trip to India for the International Grassland Congress with my wife Stephanie and others from the U.S. It was one of the most interesting international trips that I have ever been on. The Indians were gracious hosts throughout the time we were there. India is a very different country with amazing beauty like the Taj Mahal but also incredible poverty. We saw and heard about advanced agricultural production, but most farmers only had small acreages and were barely getting by.

You have probably noticed in pictures and programs about India that there are cows everywhere. And yes, cows there are pretty much given free rein to walk the streets, interrupt traffic, just go wherever they desire. India has more cows than any country in the world with 330 million. What I did not realize is that cows are very important to the economy of India and especially important to the livelihood and nutrition of poor rural families. Even though Hindu's do not eat beef, milk and dairy products are an important part of their diet. Manure is an important fertilizer for vegetable and crop production and mixed with straw and dried makes an efficient fuel for charcoal stoves. A rural family may only have one or two cows, but their milk provides important cash income and protein and energy for growing children.

In India we met a local farmer named Mr. Sood. He was an early graduate of the first land grant University started in India in the early 1960's in Pantnagar. The US government and US land grant professors were instrumental in the formation of the land grant system in India. Unlike many of his university classmates that went on to lucrative careers in the US, Canada and Europe, Mr Sood stayed in his hometown and built a successful regional seed company that provides employment to many in the area.

The thing that made the greatest impression on us was Mr Sood's annual ryegrass fields. Mr. Sood had conducted a series of research trials with a local seed company on the adaptation of annual ryegrass in northern India. Not only did they show that it was well adapted, but that when local dairy cattle on small farms were supplemented with annual ryegrass their milk production increased substantially. This was great for small farms, but many of the rural poor do not even own land and only have low quality rice straw and weedy grasses from drainage ditches to feed their milk cows.

So Mr. Sood planted 4 acres of annual ryegrass and allowed about 25 local families to hand harvest it as a high-quality feed supplement. The first year Mr Sood let them harvest the forage at no cost, the second year they paid about 1.5 cents per kilo fresh weight (2.2 lbs) and the third year, they were paying about 3 cents per kilo (about the cash cost of production). Milk production doubled in many cases and family's merger incomes and plane of nutrition increased dramatically. Through this simple effort, Mr Sood is contributing to the local economy and more importantly to the livelihood and health of individual families.

Mr. Sood wondered aloud to Stephanie and I if his life was really making a difference in comparison to his friends with their influence and wealth in other countries. We assured him that he was making a difference one family at a time.

What can we in Kentucky learn from Mr. Sood. Are you making a difference in your community and in the lives of individual families? Are you investing in young people through 4H, mentoring young farmers, volunteering with local extension activities or active in your local church or civic organization. I know many of you are already, and I commend you for that. If you're not, consider carefully how you can make a contribution and remember it's often the little things that have the greatest long-term impact.

What can we learn from Mr. Sood on the value of supplementing with a high quality forage? Some of you may already be planting annual ryegrass, cereal rye or wheat in the fall to provide a pasture supplement for low quality hay for your spring calving cows or even just planting a new stand of safe novel endophyte tall fescue. If not, consider doing this or at least stockpiling tall fescue for quality grazing through the winter. Consider planting a summer annual like pearl millet or BMR sorghum-sudangrass for high quality grazing June-September when cool grasses are in a summer slump and fescue toxicity is at its worst.

Maybe most applicable is to make sure you are using rotational grazing. In India they tie their cows up and bring feed to them. If they are in Mr. Sood's community, they are bringing very high-quality forage to them. Now you are probably not going to cut fresh grass to bring to your cattle every day, but you can provide high quality forage by opening the gate or moving an electric fence, so they have a new pasture every few days.

To learn more about forages and improved grazing sign up for programs through your local extension office or plan to attend the upcoming Beginning Grazing School April 29-30 or the KY Fencing Schools April 22 and 24. See the UK Forage Site under events for details.

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Forage News



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Upcoming Events (see Forage website for details and to register, click on EVENTS)

April 22 – KY Fencing School, Owensboro, KY

April 24 – KY Fencing School, Tompkinsville, KY

April 29-30 – Beginning Grazing School, Russellville, KY

May 21-23 – Southern Pasture Conf., Corpus Cristi, TX

Sept. 24-25 – Intermediate Grazing School, Versailles, KY

October – KY Grazing Conference

January 11-13 – AFGC Annual Conference, Asheville, NC
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