



# THE FORAGE LEADER

SUMMER 2012

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Competitions

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Fescue Survey	2
Grazing System	3
2012 Awards Program	4
Contest Winners 2012	6
Fescue Survey	7
Board of Directors	8

## UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE FESCUE MANAGEMENT SURVEY

J. A. Jennings, K. J. Simon, K. P. Coffey, B. L. Barham, R. L. Poling, J. L. Gunsaulis, and D. G. Henderson

Tall fescue is the most widespread perennial cool season grass in Arkansas. Fescue toxicosis from fescue endophyte is a widespread problem with livestock production, but producers are reluctant to convert toxic fescue in many areas. Recent research has shown the benefit of using limited acreage of novel endophyte fescue at key periods of the cattle

production cycle to reduce impact of fescue toxicity. A survey was conducted in spring 2011 to determine producers' knowledge about managing tall fescue toxicity. The survey was taken by 456 producers by three methods including

mail surveys from field day participants (33), online (323), or audience response at producer conferences (100). Percentages for some questions add up to more than 100% because respondents could choose more than one answer on certain questions. Significant association of responses at 0.05 level was determined using the Pearson Chi-Square test.



*continued on page 2*

## A Nearly Perfect Year-Round Grazing System

By V. Mac Baldwin, North Carolina Producer

As I sit down to write this article, it is Christmas eve 2011. It is a good time to think about our family, our farm and our livestock. Most of all, it is a time to thank God for HIS Blessings and HIS Providence. When Johnny Rogers, our NCFGC President, asked me to write about our grazing system--- I was quick to agree. It is not a perfect system, but I don't know of one better.

When we added winter annuals and crabgrass to our farm it profoundly changed our life and our livelihood. I believe that maybe a 50/50 combination of fescue pastures and pastures of winter annuals/ crabgrass will make a nearly perfect grazing system for any cattle farm. Actually, the ratio depends on how many young cattle you are wanting to keep. The cows get the fescue and the calves (stockers) get the winter annuals/crabgrass.

*continued on page 3*

## UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE FESCUE MANAGEMENT SURVEY

### **Who took the survey?**

Results suggest that Arkansas is definitely a cow/calf state, but the number of farms with horses and small ruminants was eye-opening. The type of operations reported were 65% cow/calf, 23.5% horses, 17% stocker calves, 13% small ruminants, and 10.3% poultry and 2% dairy. Part-time producers made up 74% of respondents, 14% were full-time producers, and a few respondents did not farm.

The incidence of fescue toxicity is widespread, but not always recognized as noted by response to the following question.

### ***Question: “If you have fescue in pastures or hay fields, do you have problems with fescue toxicity in your livestock?”***

Analysis of this question was interesting. A “yes” response was given by only 28% of participants. Of those answering “yes”, 96% observed many of the fescue toxicity symptoms/behaviours in their livestock consistent with fescue toxicity and 79% had made efforts to reduce fescue toxicity. Over 60% of respondents answered “no” or “not sure”. Only 47% of those answering “no/not sure” had made any corrective efforts for the problem even though 78% reported seeing behaviors in their livestock consistent with fescue toxicity. This suggests that many producers don’t recognize symptoms of fescue toxicity in their livestock.

The livestock behaviors commonly associated with fescue toxicity are listed below in the order of frequency ranked by survey respondents.

### ***Question: Have you observed any of the following behaviors or characteristics of your livestock while grazing fescue? (Check all that apply)***

- 35.5 % Rough hair coat
- 35.3 % Standing in ponds
- 21.3 % Lameness during winter especially in hind feet

- 17.8 % Loss of tail switch, ear tips, or rear hoof
- 17.3 % Panting, salivating in warm weather
- 12.3 % Low percentage calf crop or reproduction rate
- 10.1 % Low weaning weights

Of those that reported at least one of these behaviors, there was no significant association for those using continuous grazing, rotating pastures on intervals <2 weeks, or rotating pastures on intervals >2 weeks. The top five behaviors are visual symptoms and quickly noticed. The bottom-ranked two including low percent calf crop and low weaning weights are not as visual and require records and measurements to document. However those two symptoms have the highest impact on livestock profitability.

Actions taken to reduce fescue toxicity were ranked as follows and generally followed Extension recommendations. Research has shown mineral supplementation for fescue toxicity has questionable benefit, but that topic can be another entire article.

### ***Question: If you have tried to reduce fescue toxicity, which of the following actions have you taken?***

#### ***(Check all that apply)***

- 32.5 % Maintain mixed grass pastures
- 25.7 % Add clover or other legumes in pastures
- 21.9 % Feed mineral supplements formulated for fescue
- 19.1 % Use other forages
- 15.4 % Do not feed toxic fescue hay
- 13.2 % Graze nontoxic fescue varieties
- 9.6 % Try not to graze toxic fescue
- 7.9 % Remove livestock from toxic fescue pasture in summer

*continued on page 7*

## A Nearly Perfect Year-Round Grazing System

By V. Mac Baldwin, North Carolina Producer

In 1995, we were marketing Charolais steers to Laura's Lean beef and needed a better way to grow our steers. We went to hear R.L. Dalrymple, a Forage Researcher for the Noble Foundation, Ardmore, OK, speak at an Extension Conference held in Granville County. His presentation focused on "Red River Crabgrass", but he made the case for using winter annuals and crabgrass as a two component system for growing stocker cattle. His system starts in the fall by over-seeding forage rye, ryegrass and crimson clover into standing crabgrass. As the crabgrass goes down with the first killing frost, the over-seeded winter annuals come on strong and provides excellent grazing from Thanksgivings to June. As the winter annuals mature and fade, the crabgrass sprouts again from seed in June and provides excellent grazing from July on to frost again. This is very nearly a year-round grazing system with high energy and protein for growing young cattle. When you add the dry matter yields per acre for both the winter and summer components (about 6500 lbs and 3500 lbs respectively), it beats the yields of any perennial.

We started using the Dalrymple system in 1996 and have continued using it and expanding the acreage every year. In our case, we start about the 3rd week of August on prepared land or standing crabgrass with a mixture of 100 pounds of forage rye, 25 pounds of ryegrass, 10 pounds of crimson clover/ac, mixed in the seed box on a grain drill. We pull the drill behind an Aerway Aerator, with a double roller cultipacker behind the drill. If the land has had no previous crabgrass, we will over-seed the first crop of winter annuals the next spring with 3 pounds of crabgrass seed/ac. From that point on, the crabgrass will re-seed itself and you simply over-seed the standing crabgrass each fall with the winter annuals.

Last fall we over-seeded nearly 500 acres using this system. The No. 1 photo shows winter

annuals sowed this fall onto freshly grubbed land. The No. 2 photo shows a summer stand of red river crabgrass that has been over-seeded with winter annuals for 12 years. The No. 3 photo is a spring picture of steers on winter annuals.

In summary, RL has developed a new variety of crabgrass, called Quick and Big. It can produce crabgrass from knee to straddle high whereas good Red River will run about elbow deep. If you want more information on crabgrass, RL can be reached at 800-858-7333.

One final thought, it is extremely important to start the fall seeding of winter annuals ON TIME. Every day you wait after Sept 1, will cost you grazing. You can see photos of how we over-seed the crabgrass by taking the virtual tour on our website---  
[www.baldwinbeef.com](http://www.baldwinbeef.com).

V. Mac Baldwin  
Baldwin Family Farms, LLC



Photo 1. Winter annuals on freshly cleared land near Yanceyville, NC.



Photo 2. "Red River" crabgrass stand in its twelfth season of self reseeding.



Photo 3. Charolais steers grazing winter annuals in the spring.

## American Forage and Grassland Council 2012 Awards Program



### Distinguished Grasslander Award

#### **Dr. Joe Bouton—Ardmore, OK**

Joe Bouton is a Senior Professor at the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation's Forage Improvement Division, and Professor Emeritus, University of Georgia. Dr. Bouton is best known for the release and commercialization of 'Alfagraze' alfalfa, "MaxQ" tall fescue (a.k.a. MaxP), 'Durana' and 'Patriot' white clovers, and Blade EG1101, EG1102, and EG2101 switchgrasses.

### Merit Award

#### **Terri Hawbaker—Pewamo, MI**

Terri is a fifth generation dairy producer from Michigan. Terri and her husband Rick own and operate Grazeway Dairy along with their four children, Clyde, Eli, Ruby and George. Terri was the 2005 Forage Spokesperson for AFGC.



### Merit Award

#### **Joel Reagan—Romance, AR**



Joel Reagan grew up in the farming industry and has worked in the agriculture industry from the production side to the selling side. Joel is Regional Product Manager/ Forage Specialist for Pennington Seed Inc. Joel served on the board for AFGC and three time president of the Arkansas Forage and Grassland Council.

### Merit Award

#### **Dr. David Lang—Mississippi State, MS**

Dr. Lang has had a distinguished teaching career. Dr. Lang has authored or coauthored 140 forage related articles including 31 peer reviewed articles and he has contributed 6 papers to the American and Forage and Grassland Council. In 2003 he started reclamation work with growing forages on reclaimed mine lands and earned an award for Excellence from the Office of Surface Mining. He helped form the Mississippi Forage and Grassland Council and served as its inaugural President in 1990.



2012 Awards Program

Merit Award

**Dr. Ken Turner—Beaver, WV**

Dr. Kenneth E. Turner joined USDA, ARS, AFSRC, in 1992, and his current objectives are to understand components of grazing systems practices to synchronize better forage availability and quality to meet nutritional requirements of grazing livestock, and to provide environmentally sound grazing practices for Appalachia. Ken has been an active member of the West Virginia Forage Council for many years and nearly always has data to share at the annual conference. His contribution to forage based livestock production systems has impacted producers from West Virginia and all across the nation.



Medallion Award

**Dr. Marvin Hall—University Park, PA**



Marvin grew up on a dairy farm in central Ohio and since 1990 has been Forage Specialist at Penn State University with responsibilities in Extension, Research and Teaching. He has authored or coauthored several book chapters and numerous scientific papers as well as dozens of semi-technical and popular articles dealing with various aspects of his research. Marvin has served as Executive Vice President of PFGC since 1991 and has been the principle coordinator of forage related programs with other agencies in the state. Nationally he has served as President of AFGC and on numerous committees including the advisory board of the Council of Agricultural Technology, the National Forage Testing Program, and the National Alfalfa Review Board.

Medallion Award

**Dr. Carl Hoveland—Athens, GA**

Carl Soren Hoveland retired Sept. 2003 after a 47 year professional career. He was born in 1927 on a dairy farm near Sand Creek, WI. His forage teaching, research, and extension career covered 22 years in the Agronomy and Soils Department at Auburn University followed by 22 years at the University of Georgia Crop and Soil Sciences Department where he held the Terrell Distinguished Professor chair. One of his most enjoyable duties was teaching students in Forage Management and Crop Ecology courses. He has authored a large number of journal articles, bulletins, and popular articles but considers his greatest contribution was as coauthor with Don Ball and Garry Lacefield of the widely used book 'Southern Forages', now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Among his awards were the Auburn University Graduate Faculty Lecturer Award, Progressive Farmer Magazine Man of the Year Award, Georgia Cattlemen Hall of Fame Award and American Forage and Grassland Council Medallion Award.



## AFGC 2012 Contest Winners

### Forage Bowl 2012

1st University of Kentucky  
2nd Purdue University

### Photo Contest 2012

Overall Terri Hawbaker, MI-FGC  
Grazing Terri Hawbaker, MI-FGC  
Education Christopher Geraldts, KY-FGC  
Harvested Forages Christopher Geraldts, KY-FGC  
Open Jason Tower, IN-FGC  
Wildlife & Conserv. Kenton Sena, KY-FGC

### Emerging Scientist 2012

1st Cody Zilverberg, Texas Tech  
2nd Hunter Stambaugh, Penn State University  
3rd Ben Goff, University of Kentucky

### Forage Spokesperson 2012

1st Brent White, KY-FGC  
2nd Mike Lauwers, MI-FGC  
3rd Cliff Hawbaker, PA-FGC

### Youth Essay Contest 2012

19-22 age group  
1st Ethan Smrtnik, The Ohio State University  
2nd Lindy Smith, The Ohio State University  
3rd Alex Newman, The Ohio State University  
14 & Under age group  
1st Jake Tower, Indiana

### President's Award 2012

Illinois Forage & Grassland Council

# UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE FESCUE MANAGEMENT SURVEY

**Based on the information about novel endophyte (nontoxic) fescue varieties presented at U of A Division of Agriculture programs you attended, would you consider planting a novel endophyte (nontoxic) fescue variety?**

65.7 YES

34.3 NO

**If you WOULD consider planting a novel endophyte fescue, which of the following statements best describe(s) your plans? (Check all that apply)**

27.0 Only considering planting novel endophyte fescue right now, no definite timeframe to plant.

I want more information on the benefits of novel endophyte fescue varieties

10.7 I am waiting on the seed price for novel endophyte fescue to go down

6.1 I plan to plant novel endophyte fescue within 5 years

6.1 I am waiting on a better selection of novel endophyte fescue varieties

4.2 I have already planted novel endophyte fescue

3.9 I plan to plant novel endophyte fescue this year (2011)

3.1 I plan to plant novel endophyte fescue next year (2012)

Most respondents (66%) were interested in planting the new novel endophyte fescue varieties and wanted more information. Only a few had a definite timeframe for planting NE+ fescue. Of the groups responding to the survey, cow/calf producers were most likely to plant NE+ fescue compared to those growing stockers, horses, or small ruminants. Full-time producers were no more likely than part-time producers to plant NE+ fescue and those noting fescue toxicity in their livestock were no more likely than those that reported no fescue toxicity to plant NE+ fescue. The major limitations for those that would not consider planting the NE+ fescue are shown below.

**If you WOULD NOT consider planting a novel endophyte fescue, which of the following statements best describe(s) your reasons? (Check all that apply)**

20.0 % Not enough benefit to my farm profitability

16.0 % Seed cost for novel endophyte fescue varieties is too high

13.2 % Don't have the equipment to renovate pastures or hay acres

11.0 % Can't eliminate toxic fescue that's already in pastures or hay acres

10.3 % Believe that novel endophyte fescue pasture or hay acres will become contaminated with toxic fescue

9.9 % Don't believe novel endophyte fescue will survive

The history of stand-persistence failures of endophyte-free fescue is remembered all too well in the countryside. Continued education regarding renovation of toxic fescue and management of novel endophyte fescue is still needed. Interest in novel endophyte fescue is growing and new variety/novel endophyte combinations are coming to the market. That should provide more encouragement to producers that the technology is real and should be adopted.

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## AFGC Annual Conference

January 6-8, 2013

Marriott RiverCenter · Covington, KY

Including:

**National Forage Spokesperson  
Competition**

### Conference Highlights

- **Emerging Scientist Competition**
- **National Photo Contest and National Essay Contest**
- **Annual Awards Program**

**American Forage and Grassland Council  
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The Forage Leader is published quarterly by the American Forage and Grassland Council. For editorial or sponsorship information, please contact AFGC via mail, phone, fax or e-mail. AFGC, PO Box 867, Berea, KY 40403. Telephone 800.944.2342. Fax 859.623.8694. E-mail [info@afgc.org](mailto:info@afgc.org).

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