



## AMERICAN FORAGE AND GRASSLAND COUNCIL AFFILIATE COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FORM

**Affiliate:** Kentucky Forage & Grassland Council

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**Submitted by:** Traci Missun, KFGC President

### Council Overview:

**KFGC's mission is to promote the use of forages as profitable, economical and environmentally sound agriculture** through 1) education, communication, and professional development of producers, scientists, educators, and commercial representatives, and 2) communication with policy makers and consumers in Kentucky.

Strategies include:

- **Offering events in multiple locations** throughout Kentucky to provide better access for participants.
- **Participating in Kentucky Farm Bureau's Forage Advisory Committee and Annual Commodities Meeting.**
- **Recruiting potential board candidates to ensure representation from a variety** of farm operations, geographic locations, business types, and multiple public universities.
- **Partnering with livestock associations/councils and universities** to provide forage information specific to cattle, sheep, goats, and horses.
- **Using forage topics identified as top producer needs in events.** KFGC continues to address issues and topics relevant to producers needs in conferences and field days.

### Events:

2018 Events included:

- **American Forage & Grassland Council Annual Conference** – KFGC hosted the AFGC Annual Conference in Louisville in January 2018. This was a successful event, with over 350 in attendance despite inclement weather.
- **Forages at Kentucky Cattlemen's Association Convention:** KFGC, in partnership with University of Kentucky Extension, offers educational sessions and displays each year at the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association annual convention in January. This continues to be a successful partnership, with over 150 producers in attendance. This year, KFGC also hosted booth space to talk with producers during the convention.
- **KY Alfalfa and Stored Forage Conference:** This annual conference continues to be well-attended and was held in the southcentral Kentucky. Attendance was over 125 this year. A highlight of this conference is producer awards given by the Kentucky

Department of Agriculture's Forage Testing Program. Awards are based on test quality of different hay types produced throughout the season. Thank you to KDA's Forage Testing Program for recognizing producers.

- **KY Fencing Schools:** KFGC offered Fencing Schools in both Princeton and Versailles. There was a great deal of interest in these, and both locations were at capacity. Attendance was capped at 70 across both at each location.
- **KY Small Ruminant Grazing Conference:** This conference was supported by KFGC and included many partnering organizations including: KY Sheep and Goat Development Office, KY Goat Producers Association, KY Sheep and Wool Producers Association, KY State University, UK Cooperative Extension Service and UK Robinson Center for Appalachian Resource Sustainability. In addition to forages, animal health issues were featured, allowing local veterinarians to receive 3 hours of continuing education credits. Over 80 people participated in this meeting.
- **Novel Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop:** KFGC offered this workshop in Lexington in collaboration with the National Alliance for Grassland Renewal. A major theme of this conference was the value of novel endophyte tall fescue and "how to's" of establishment, pasture and hay management, and feeding. There were over 65 participants in the workshop.
- **Grazing Schools:** The Kentucky Grazing School is a partnership with UK Extension and offered at two locations again this year, Versailles and Princeton. Attendance is always very good for this hands-on school that provides participants with both classroom learning on all aspects of managing grazing for animal productivity and pasture health, and field experience setting up temporary electric fencing and waterers. There were 32 participants at Princeton and 45 participants at Versailles.
- **KFGC Field Days:** KFGC offered two field days this year to provide access to producers from east and west Kentucky. Morehead State University (MSU) hosted the east field day at their farm; approximately 100 participants toured the MSU research farm and heard presentations on innovative fescue endophyte research, using stockpiling tall fescue, producing quality baleage and environmental stewardship. The west field day was hosted by Dogwood Farm in La Center that utilizes only forages to finish beef cattle. This field day focused especially on how Dogwood farm uses a diverse mix of forages including crabgrass and native grasses to provide near year-round pasture. The west KY field day drew over 150 participants from six states.
- **Grazing Conference:** KFGC offered Grazing Conferences in two locations again in 2018 – Winchester and Hopkinsville. The conference is a partnership with UK Extension, and

the featured topic was 'Turning Grass into Cash'. Speakers represented many organizations and ag businesses, including University of Kentucky, Kentucky State University and Michigan State University. Each location had producer presenters who were producing and marketing grass fed and grass finished beef on family farm operations. Over 175 people attended over the two locations.

The Grazing Conference featured KFGC's **Kentucky Forage Spokesperson** contest, a very popular session at this conference. Competitors this year were Anne Bays, Billy Glen Turpin, and Jerry Samples. Anne Bays won the contest and will represent Kentucky at the AFGC Conference in January 2019.

The Grazing Conference also honored several individuals and their work to promote the forage industry and educating producers:

- Grassroots Award – Debbie Dulworth (Ballard County producer)
  - Public Service, County Award – Adam Probst (Woodford County ANR Agent)
  - Public Service, State Award – Krista Lea (UK Plant & Soil Sciences)
  - Industry Award – David Mitchell (Central Farm Supply)
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- **Equine Farm & Facilities Expo** – KFGC has worked closely with the University of Kentucky to develop new programming in the forage and livestock area. One of the most successful initiatives has been in the Equine Area. An example is the annual Equine Farm and Facilities Expo. The 2018 event was attended by over 60 participants.

### **Forage Community Involvement:**

As mentioned in the events section, KFGC has partnered with several commodity groups, universities, and businesses to generate a larger audience and to concentrate efforts to educate about forages. The council will seek further opportunities to partner and achieve common goals of promoting forage education and industry.

### **Member Communications:**

A new format for the monthly **Kentucky Forage News** was introduced in 2016. This newsletter is the primary vehicle to provide information and updates to KFGC members and others that are interested. In 2018 over 750 forage producers, industry personnel and public sector employees received Forage News.

KFGC has also used online and written surveys to gather member feedback on important issues and needs for forage producers. The council used this information to prioritize topics for future events.

**Membership:**

Over the last two years, KFGC has sought to encourage membership by adding the option of paying dues along with conference registration fees. KFGC Membership rose from 83 members in 2016 to 177 members in 2018.

**Additional Information:**

KFGC was actively involved in promoting National Forage Week June 17-23, 2018 and look forward to continuing to promote this important week. We especially want to encourage AFGC and local affiliates to develop a larger social media presence for National Forage Week 2019.

KFGC maintains a Facebook page to promote events and other forage news:

<https://www.facebook.com/kyforageandgrasslandcouncil/?ref=bookmarks>. The page was created approximately one year ago and had 90 followers in November. Using a Facebook ad promotion, page follows increased from 95 to 154 in one week, at an ad cost of less than \$22.00. Posts that include video, on-farm photos, action photos, and producer photos garnered the most activity.