

Conference Focuses On Getting More From Alfalfa

PRINCETON, KY.

For Clayton Gerald, the Kentucky Alfalfa Conference positively impacted his operation and future.

Gerald was a Hart County dairy farmer using alfalfa to feed his animals when he attended the 3rd annual Kentucky Alfalfa Conference in 1983. Within seven years, he sold his entire herd to grow alfalfa and other quality forages to sell to horse farmers. He now grows alfalfa and timothy hay on more than 600 acres and is considered by many as one of the best hay producers in the state.

On Feb. 23, Gerald will speak for a third time at the Kentucky Alfalfa Conference at the Cave City Convention Center about his operation, equipment, yields and the benefits of growing alfalfa.

"Alfalfa is a good alternative crop for smaller producers," he said. "It allows producers, including myself, to make a living off smaller acreage."

Garry Lacefield, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture extension forage specialist, started the Kentucky Alfalfa Conference 32 years ago to help producers learn more about

the highly desirable forage.

Bill Payne, a replacement dairy heifer producer in Lincoln County, knows alfalfa has paid dividends for his operation.

"I like the quality of the forage that alfalfa provides," he said. "It takes cattle through the winter without using protein supplements, and it allows them to continue to gain weight by grazing on pasture during the summer."

Payne will join Gerald and Christian County alfalfa producer Charles Powell on a farmer panel, which is the conference's featured event.

The conference also includes presentations on the following topics: Roundup Ready varieties' performance, marketing, Kentucky Department of Agriculture's Hay Testing Program, alfalfa seed coating, National Alfalfa and Forage Alliance, the role of alfalfa in horse diets, role of the forage in beef diets. The conference begins at 8 a.m. CST and ends at 3 p.m.

The registration fee is \$15 and \$5 for students and is collected at the conference. More information is available on the UK Forage Extension website.

Continuing education units for Certified Crop Advisors are available. △



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