

Ryan F. Quarles
Commissioner



Corporate Drive
Complex
Frankfort, KY 40601
(502) 573-0282

Kentucky Department of Agriculture

May 30, 2018

**To: KDA Forage Testing Program Participants
County Extension Agents**

Re: Changes to Kentucky Department of Agriculture Forage Testing Program

Good morning,

As we head into the next fiscal year, the Kentucky Department of Agriculture wanted to notify you of changes coming to the Forage Testing Program. Effective June 30, 2018, KDA will no longer collect hay and forage samples directly from the farm. KDA will still offer the same \$10 per sample testing service, but due to financial constraints is unable to allocate staff to collect on-farm samples.

In recent months, KDA solicited feedback from hay producers, extension agents and industry experts to ensure we are providing the highest quality services to Kentucky's \$600 million dollar forage industry. Even amid budget cuts and rising pension costs, KDA is committed to sustaining the Forage Testing Program in some form during this difficult financial environment.

KDA has partnered with University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service to continue offering forage testing to Kentucky hay producers. Under the new program operations:

- KDA will continue marketing and outreach for Kentucky farmers;
- KDA will continue offering low-cost forage testing at \$10 per sample at the Frankfort lab;
- Hay producers will now be required to ship samples to KDA for testing; and
- UK Extension agents may assist in collecting and shipping samples to KDA for testing.

Change in on-farm forage sampling

We are asking producers to begin making arrangements now to prepare for this program change. KDA will now rely on hay producers with assistance from County Extension Agents to pull samples and ship them to KDA for analysis.

To ensure that samples are properly collected, KDA recommends farmers and County Extension Agents complete a free, one-hour course provided by the National Forage Testing Association (NFTA). This training can be accessed online at www.foragetesting.org (under the Certified Sampler tab). Protocols for proper sample collection can also be found on this page.

County Extension Agents who wish to procure a hay probe to lend or rent to local producers should contact Tom Keene, UK Agronomy Specialist at tom.keene@uky.edu or (859)-257-3144. For producers considering purchasing their own hay probe, a list of recommended models is available at www.foragetesting.org.

Services for local hay contests, auctions, for-sale website will continue

KDA will continue to offer on-site testing and educational programming for local hay contests and hay auctions. KDA asks that any hay contest organizers collect samples and send to KDA for testing at least one week prior to the contest, if feasible.

KDA's mobile hay testing will continue operations for educational purposes only. The stationary lab in Frankfort is NFTA certified, and should be used whenever possible. KDA's mobile testing lab is not certified by NFTA.

The Forage For-Sale Website and Hay Hotline service managed by KDA will continue. More information about the Forage Testing Program can be found at www.kyagr.com. KDA welcomes farmer input on the significance of this service and will use this feedback to guide long-term policy decisions about testing costs and program operations. Feedback on KDA's Forage Testing Program should be sent to Plant Division Director Brent Burchett at brent.burchett@ky.gov or (502)-782-4120.

For questions about testing, please contact KDA Forage Program Manager Kim Field at kimberly.field@ky.gov or (502)-782-9210.

Thank you,



Brent Burchett, Director
Plant Division
Office of Agricultural Marketing
Kentucky Department of Agriculture

