

Alabama Bermudagrass Hay Growers Summit Targets Advanced Producers

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INTRODUCTION

Commercial bermudagrass hay producers with a profit motive need advanced education and prescribed management practices prior to spring green up. Attendees are primarily focused on the equine hay market and have demonstrated a willingness to follow the recommendations presented each year.

Objectives:

1. Provide current recommendations for the upcoming growing season while acknowledging hay market realities
2. Focus on soil fertility, insect/weed pest management and practical solutions for a targeted clientele
3. Proactive efforts lead to fewer in-season issues and significant time savings on farm visits

METHODS

- Conducted for 6 years in North Alabama
- Began in 2017 as an invitation-only event for commercial bermudagrass hay producers
- Held in February each year
- Six-hour, lecture format workshop
- Primary speakers are Extension, with a mix of industry reps
- Promoted to top producers over the course of the year
- Average attendance of 18 hay producers
- Producer panels and roundtable discussion included
- Offered virtually via Zoom platform in 2021

VIRTUAL FORMAT

Logistics of meeting administration:

- Offered local viewing locations at county offices
- Connectivity unstable in many local offices
- Multiple co-hosts/admins selected as backup
- Moderator hierarchy established
- Designated sole individual as contact during the event
- Local meeting host with IT abilities & resources
- Low-cost alternative and major time savings

Bermudagrass Hay Growers Summit

Tuesday, February 15, 2022

Time: 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM

Location: Boaz VFW Fairgrounds (1423 US Highway 431, Boaz AL 35957)

Topics

- 9:00 Welcome, Introduction of Speakers – Gerry Thompson
- 9:05 Weed Control Options in Bermudagrass Hay Fields with a Special Emphasis on Controlling Undesirable Grass Weeds – Dr. David Russell (AU/ACES)
- 10:00 Basics of Insect Pest Control/Management in Bermudagrass Hay Fields – Dr. Landon Marks (AU/ACES)
- 10:30 Nutrient Management Challenges and Opportunities for Bermudagrass Hay producers – Kent Stanford (AU/ACES)
- 11:30 A “Boots on the Ground” Industry Perspective for Commodity Prices and Supply Chain Issues During the 2022 Growing Season—Perry Mobley (Range and Pasture Specialist, GreenpointAG)
- 12:00 Lunch
- 12:45 Cash Flow Budgeting for Bermudagrass Hay Producers During Challenging Economic Situations – Jared Daniel (AU/ACES)
- 1:45 Roundtable Discussion “What we learned in 2021 that will help us be prepared for the challenges we will all face in 2022” and “Alternative forage crops that might allow commercial hay producers to decrease input costs and spread the economic risk associated with high quality hay production” – Panel Discussion
- 2:45 Final questions/comments and plans for upcoming Bermudagrass Hay Growers Field Day—Gerry Thompson
- 3:00 Dismiss

Pre-registration required by Feb. 11
Call or email Gerry at 256-508-2020
thomppl@auburn.edu —\$20 registration fee
(pay at the door)

The “Summit” is an intense, day-long program designed to meet the specific needs of dedicated, experienced bermudagrass hay producers that deal with the challenges of producing very high-quality hay demanded by their customers.

For more information contact your local Regional Extension Agent or
Gerry Thompson 256-508-2020
Landon Marks 256-706-0032
Kent Stanford 256-557-1206



The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) is an equal opportunity educator and employer. Everyone is welcome!

EVALUATION RESULTS

- Increased management on 11,266 acres each year
- \$17,704.60 per person economic impact from implementing recommendations provided at the event
- 4.63 rating (on a 1 poor -5 exceptional) of all topics
- 29.4% increase in knowledge by attending (with a highly experienced audience)
- 98.2% of attendees planned to implement at least one recommendation
- Average of 625 acres managed per participant (6 yr avg)

Evaluation Questions	Yes	No	Maybe
Was workshop useful?	90.6%	0.0%	9.4%
Was length of program appropriate	87.1%	9.7% (Too long) 3.2% (Too short)	-----
Would you recommend the meeting to others?	96.9%	0.0%	3.1%
Did the course meet your expectations?	93.8%	0.0%	0.3%

CONCLUSIONS

- In-person, targeted programs for specific enterprises still work!
- Providing reliable content draws repeat clientele
- Direct promotion efforts pay off
- Online option expands the program reach but impact is harder to gauge and does not result in local engagement
- Hybrid options are not conducive to discussion formats
- Connection with commercial hay producers can lead to their involvement with related Extension events

2021 Virtual Hay Summit: Out-of-State Attendees

