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INTRODUCTION

Kansas is a top producer of meat and animal products. An important input for the beef and dairy industries is the fodder or roughage that forms a key element in ruminant diets. In 2005, Kansas farms produced 3.2 million tons of corn and sorghum silage (January 12, 2006 Crops Report, Kansas Agricultural Statistics Service). Additional roughage was obtained from other summer annual forages such as sorghum-sudan, sudan, and millet. This publication presents the results of tests designed to compare forage production and quality of corn, sorghum, and sorghum-sudan hybrids under typical Kansas growing conditions.

PROCEDURES

Crop performance tests in Kansas are a cooperative effort of K-State Research and Extension and the private seed industry. Entry fees from private seed companies help finance the tests. Seed companies receive test announcements and entry forms in late January; deadlines for receipt of completed entry forms and seed are in early March. Because entry selection and location are voluntary, not all hybrids grown in the state are included in tests, and hybrids are not grown uniformly at all test locations.

Seed companies were offered the opportunity to participate in summer annual forage tests at four locations in 2005: Parsons, Hutchinson, Hays, and Colby. Six companies entered a total of 9 forage sorghum hybrids and 11 hay types (sorghum-sudan hybrids, sudan, or millet). The test at Parsons was dropped because of poor stands.

Three plots (replications) of each hybrid were grown at each location in a randomized complete-block design. Each forage sorghum plot consisted of four rows trimmed to a length of 20 to 30 feet, depending on location. Forage and grain yield estimates and samples for moisture and quality analysis were obtained from the center two rows. Hay-type entries were planted in narrow rows at high populations.

Each species was harvested as close as possible to the stage of maturity that would optimize yield and quality of forage – forage sorghum hybrids at mid-dough and sorghum-sudan hybrids at boot stage. The hay-type hybrids were harvested twice (Cut 1 and Cut 2).

Samples from each harvest were collected to determine moisture content and for laboratory analysis of forage quality: crude protein (CP), neutral detergent fiber (NDF), acid detergent fiber (ADF), and acid detergent lignin (ADL). Crude protein was calculated by multiplying the nitrogen content by 6.25, the average proportion of elemental nitrogen to plant protein.

Near infrared reflectance (NIR) technology was used to predict forage quality parameters. Calibration equations were based on a subset of samples from the current year that were analyzed with wet chemistry. The calibration equations fit the data quite well, with $R^2$ of 0.99, 0.97, 0.95, and 0.92 for CP, NDF, ADF, and ADL, respectively.

Although not all of the crude protein in a forage is available to the animal as true protein, a forage with more crude protein generally requires less supplemental protein in the ration. Neutral detergent fiber (NDF) estimates total fiber consisting of cellulose, hemicellulose, and lignin, and is often related to intake. Forages with lesser NDF values are desirable because the animal can consume more of the forage, requiring fewer ration supplements. Acid detergent fiber (ADF) estimates total cellulose, lignin, and pectin, and often is used to predict the energy content of forage. Forages with lesser ADF values are desirable because of their greater energy content and higher digestibility. Acid detergent lignin (ADL) estimates the lignin fraction, an indigestible fiber with no nutritive value. Lesser ADL values are associated with greater forage digestibility.

RESULTS

Individual test results are presented in Tables 1 to 6. Average values for hybrids in all 3 tests grown in 2005 are listed in Tables 7 and 8. Hybrid rankings often followed similar trends when grown in more than one location or in more than one year. Some hybrids, however, were more consistent than others or were better adapted to either dryland or irrigated conditions.

Species yield differences depended on test location. At Hutchinson, the hay types out yielded the forage sorghums on average. Second-cutting yields were much lower than those for the first cutting at Hays and Colby, but only slightly lower at Hutchinson. Forage sorghums out yielded the hay types at Hays and Colby. In general, yields were less than those for last year.

As in past years, forage sorghum hybrids tended to have less crude protein than the hay types had. The various fiber components (NDF, ADF, ADL) showed inconsistent species patterns. At Hutchinson, the hay types had fiber and lignin equal to or less than what the forage sorghums had. At Hays and Colby, the forage sorghums generally had less fiber on average than the hay types had, although average lignin content was similar. Individual hybrids from either species differed from the species averages for most quality characteristics. Harvest management and hybrid selection both play an important role in obtaining high yields of quality forage.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRAND</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Yield (pounds DM/acre)</th>
<th>Moist. (%)</th>
<th>Grain Days</th>
<th>Ht. Lodg.</th>
<th>Pop. (1000 PPA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total Cut 1 Cut 2</td>
<td>Cut 1 Cut 2</td>
<td>yield (bu)</td>
<td>to bim</td>
<td>(%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>FORAGE SORGHUM</strong></td>
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<td>GOLDEN HARVEST</td>
<td>RE GRO EX34 (SS)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CV(%)</td>
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<td>-- 5 5 --</td>
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<td></td>
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2 - Year Averages

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<th>NAME</th>
<th>Yield (pounds DM/acre)</th>
<th>Moist. (%)</th>
<th>Grain Days</th>
<th>Ht. Lodg.</th>
<th>Pop. (1000 PPA)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total Cut 1 Cut 2</td>
<td>Cut 1 Cut 2</td>
<td>yield (bu)</td>
<td>to bim</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FORAGE SORGHUM</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>52 74 89 25</td>
<td>22.7</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HAY TYPES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>MATUREITY CHECK</td>
<td>NB280S (SS)</td>
<td>12,433 6,053 6,380 79 76</td>
<td>-- 66 64 --</td>
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<td>SORG. PARTNERS</td>
<td>SORDAN HEADLESS (SS)</td>
<td>12,009 5,802 6,208 82 82</td>
<td>-- 55 54 --</td>
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<tr>
<td>BUFFALO</td>
<td>GRAZEX BMR727 (SS)</td>
<td>11,391 5,588 5,803 81 79</td>
<td>-- 59 60 --</td>
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<tr>
<td>MATUREITY CHECK</td>
<td>PIPER (SU)</td>
<td>11,351 5,191 6,160 79 70</td>
<td>-- 63 63 --</td>
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<tr>
<td>SORG. PARTNERS</td>
<td>TRUDAN HEADLESS (SU)</td>
<td>11,041 5,139 5,902 83 81</td>
<td>-- 53 56 --</td>
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</table>

3 - Year Averages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRAND</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Yield (pounds DM/acre)</th>
<th>Moist. (%)</th>
<th>Grain Days</th>
<th>Ht. Lodg.</th>
<th>Pop. (1000 PPA)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total Cut 1 Cut 2</td>
<td>Cut 1 Cut 2</td>
<td>yield (bu)</td>
<td>to bim</td>
<td>(%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FORAGE SORGHUM</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEKALB</td>
<td>FS-5</td>
<td>8,991 -- -- 63 --</td>
<td>39 77 82 1</td>
<td>20.1</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>7,533 -- -- 61 --</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEKALB</td>
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<td>AVERAGES</td>
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<td>37 83 84 25</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HAY TYPES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATUREITY CHECK</td>
<td>NB280S (SS)</td>
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<td>80.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* Unless two varieties differ by more than the LSD, little confidence can be placed in one being superior to the other.

** SS = Sorghum-sudan hybrid, SU = Sudan.
Table 2. Hutchinson Summer Annual Forage Test - Forage Quality, 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRAND</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Protein (%)</th>
<th>NDF (%)</th>
<th>ADF (%)</th>
<th>ADL (%)</th>
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<td>FS-5</td>
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<td>59.9</td>
<td>36.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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<td>61.0</td>
<td>37.2</td>
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<td>AVERAGES</td>
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<td>6.8</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<td>LSD(0.05)*</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>NS</td>
<td>NS</td>
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<td>HAY TYPES**</td>
<td>SORG. PARTNERS SORDAN HEADLESS (SS)</td>
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<td>33.4 39.2</td>
<td>5.8 6.6</td>
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<td>59.1 63.0</td>
<td>35.0 37.5</td>
<td>5.8 7.4</td>
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<td>BUFFALO</td>
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<td>31.8 37.7</td>
<td>5.2 6.4</td>
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<td>GRAZEX BMR727 (SS)</td>
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<td>58.4 62.6</td>
<td>34.0 39.0</td>
<td>5.1 6.2</td>
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<td>BUFFALO</td>
<td>16.0 15.0</td>
<td>58.6 63.1</td>
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<td>59.2 63.1</td>
<td>34.7 39.2</td>
<td>5.3 6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>61.7 61.4</td>
<td>38.5 37.4</td>
<td>6.3 6.9</td>
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<td>5.5 4.1</td>
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<td>LSD(0.05)*</td>
<td>NS NS</td>
<td>NS NS</td>
<td>NS NS</td>
<td>0.7 0.7</td>
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2-year Averages

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<th>NDF (%)</th>
<th>ADF (%)</th>
<th>ADL (%)</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>MATURITY CHECK</td>
<td>EARLY SUMAC</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
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3-year Averages

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* Unless two varieties differ by more than the LSD, little confidence can be placed in one being superior to the other.
** SS = Sorghum-sudan hybrid, SU = Sudan.
### Table 3. Hays Summer Annual Forage Test, 2005.

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#### 2 - Year Averages

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#### 3 - Year Averages

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* Unless two varieties differ by more than the LSD, little confidence can be placed in one being superior to the other.
** SS = Sorghum-sudan hybrid, SU = Sudan.
Table 4. Hays Summer Annual Forage Test - Forage Quality, 2005.

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2-year Averages

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3-year Averages

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<th>ADF (%)</th>
<th>ADL (%)</th>
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<td>Cut 1</td>
<td>Cut 2</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>61.2</td>
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* Unless two varieties differ by more than the LSD, little confidence can be placed in one being superior to the other.
** SS = Sorghum-sudan hybrid, SU = Sudan.
Table 5. Colby Irrigated Summer Annual Forage Test, 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BRAND</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Forage Yield (pounds DM/acre)</th>
<th>Moist. (%)</th>
<th>Grain Days</th>
<th>Ht. Lodg (1000 ppa)</th>
<th>Pop. Averages</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Cut 2</td>
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<td>Cut 2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>CV(%)</td>
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<td>--</td>
<td>--</td>
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HAY TYPES**

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<th>NAME</th>
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<th>Grain Days</th>
<th>Ht. Lodg (1000 ppa)</th>
<th>Pop. Averages</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Cut 2</td>
<td>Cut 1</td>
<td>Cut 2</td>
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<tr>
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2 - Year Averages

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<th>Grain Days</th>
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<th>Pop. Averages</th>
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<td>Cut 1</td>
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<td>64</td>
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HAY TYPES**

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<th>BRAND</th>
<th>NAME</th>
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<th>Moist. (%)</th>
<th>Grain Days</th>
<th>Ht. Lodg (1000 ppa)</th>
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<td>94</td>
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Table 5. Colby Irrigated Summer Annual Forage Test, 2005 (continued).

<table>
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<th>BRAND NAME</th>
<th>Forage Yield (pounds DM/acre)</th>
<th>Moist. (%)</th>
<th>Grain Days to BLM (bu/a)</th>
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<td>16,522</td>
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* Unless two varieties differ by more than the LSD, little confidence can be placed in one being superior to the other.
** SS = Sorghum-sudan hybrid, SU = Sudan.

This publication from the Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service has been archived. Current information is available from http://www.ksre.ksu.edu.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>BRAND</th>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>Protein (%)</th>
<th>NDF (%)</th>
<th>ADF (%)</th>
<th>ADL (%)</th>
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<td>Cut 2</td>
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2-year Averages

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(continued)
Table 6. Colby Irrigated Summer Annual Forage Test - Forage Quality, 2005 (continued).

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* Unless two varieties differ by more than the LSD, little confidence can be placed in one being superior to the other.
** SS = Sorghum-sudan hybrid, SU = Sudan.
### Table 7. 2005 Summer Annual Forages, Multi-location Averages.

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* SS = Sorghum-sudan hybrid, SU = Sudan.

### Table 8. 2005 Summer Annual Forages, Multi-location Averages.

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* SS = Sorghum-sudan hybrid, SU = Sudan.

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* BMR = brown mid-rib, PS = photoperiod sensitive
** E = early, M = medium, L = late, PS = photoperiod sensitive

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Permission is hereby given to Kansas State University to test varieties and/or hybrids designated on the attached entry forms in the manner indicated in the test announcements. I certify that seed submitted for testing is a true sample of the seed being offered for sale.

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