We have received a couple calls regarding the presence of mushrooms in pastures around eastern Kentucky and whether or not it is a problem for livestock grazing on that pasture. What follows is a statement by LDDC Clinical Toxicologist, Dr. Cindy Gaskill:

Mushrooms appear to be more prevalent this year due to the rainy wet weather. Thousands of species of mushrooms exist, many of which do not pose a threat to animals. However, a number of poisonous mushroom species exist and can potentially cause poisoning in animals. Mushrooms can contain a variety of toxic substances, and clinical signs vary greatly depending on mushroom type and toxins present. Identification of mushroom species is virtually impossible for the lay person, and can even be difficult for experienced mycologists. Identification of mushrooms and determination of risk can be assisted by providing information on regional location, growth substrate, and tree type if growing in association with trees. For more information on risks of toxic mushrooms, information on where to send mushrooms for identification, control of mushrooms, clinical signs associated with toxic mushrooms, and other information please contact Dr. Cynthia Gaskill at the Livestock Disease Diagnostic laboratory, 859-253-0571 ext 148 or cynthia.gaskill@uky.edu.

Dr. Gaskill goes on to say that if a farm has the ability to rotate livestock to pastures that do not contain mushrooms that this is recommended. “Reducing exposure is always helpful with any potential toxicosis. Fortunately, mushroom toxicity in large animals is a rare occurrence. We see this more in small animals,” said Dr. Gaskill.

Please call Dr. Gaskill for more detailed information.

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