



FORAGE BITS

Winter 2017

Publication of the Maryland-Delaware Forage Council, Inc.

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President's Column

Management Strategies to Be Addressed at Hay and Pasture Conferences

Winter is the time for educational meetings and conferences to learn the latest new developments and update your management skills. Forages tend to be overlooked in a lot of the county Extension educational programming but regional conferences that focus on hay and pasture management are offered within reasonable travel distance for most people. I want to emphasize once again a couple of conferences that should be of interest to producers and agribusiness and agency personnel in Maryland, Delaware and surrounding states.

Do you know that plant structure and type of growth affect how forage grasses and legumes should be managed? For example, are you aware that orchard grass should be grazed differently than Kentucky bluegrass or even tall fescue. Plant structure and type of growth will also affect what grasses and legumes should be combined in hay and pasture mixtures.

Dr. Ray Smith, University of Kentucky Extension Forage Specialist, will discuss The Effects of Plant Structure and Type of Growth on Hay and Pasture Management at a series of Hay and Pasture Conferences to be held in Maryland and Delaware in early January. He says that the best managers do not rely on a simple list of recommendations they may have read in a publication or heard at a conference but instead, they focus on understanding how the plant grows. Once growers understand grass and legume plant growth they can determine the management strategy that is appropriate for their particular operation.

Since management varies according to region, soil type, climatic conditions, etc., there is no

one management scheme that works for everyone. Dr. Smith's presentation will focus on plant growth and the impact that growth type has on how each grass and legume should be properly managed.

As I pointed out in a previous column, attendees will also be able to get a free forage analysis if they bring a bale of hay to one of the conference locations. David Wert, President and Reporter, Market News, Lewisburg, PA, will discuss Hay Testing: How to Sample and What Numbers to Expect for Various Types of Hay and demonstrate the process of performing a forage analysis with a portable NIRS (near infrared spectroscopy) unit.

Please RSVP by January 2 to Dan Severson (severson@udel.edu or 302-831-8860) if you plan to bring a bale of hay to be cored and sampled at the Delmarva conference, to Ben Beale (bbeale@umd.edu or 301 475-4484) if you plan to bring a bale of hay to the Southern Maryland conference, or Willie Lantz (wlantz@umd.edu or 301 334-6960) if you plan to bring a bale to the Tri-State conference.

Forage analysis reports have many, many numbers. Do you know what all those numbers mean and what they represent? Following Wert's presentation and demonstration, I will define and interpret the numbers on a sample report -- Cutting through the Fog: How to Make Sense of a Forage Analysis Report.

This year we will be honored to have Robert Shoemaker, President Elect of the American Forage and Grassland Council, bring greetings from our parent international organization. The American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC) is an international organization made up of 22 affiliate councils in the United States and Canada, of which the Maryland-Delaware Forage Council is one. Shoemaker is a nutrient management specialist with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and

cow-calf producer from Fauquier County, Virginia.

Weed and pest control topics will round out the program agendas at each location. Agendas for each conference will be posted online at <http://psla.umd.edu/extension/maryland-forages-program> or contact the local coordinators listed above for more information.

The Delmarva conference will be held January 10 at the Delaware State Fairgrounds in Harrington, the Southern Maryland conference January 11 at the Baden Volunteer Fire Department, Brandywine, MD, and Tri-State conferences January 12, at Garrett College, McHenry, MD.

Also plan to take advantage of the unique opportunity to hear a host of renowned speakers address a wide range of topics when the Northeast Pasture Consortium, Maryland Cattlemen's Association and the Maryland-Delaware Forage Council, combine efforts for a joint Northeast Pasture Consortium Annual Conference and Maryland Cattle Industry Convention/Hay and Pasture Conference. The dates are March 2-4, 2017 at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Hagerstown.

The theme of this conference will be From Pasture to Table: Grass-Fed Livestock Production of Meat and Milk and Its Preparation – Their Effects on Fatty Acid Composition and Human Health. The program agenda and registration information will be posted online at <http://www.marylandcattle.org>.

I hope to see you at one or more of these conferences.

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Don't Forget to Bring Your Hay Samples to the 2017 Hay and Pasture Conference Series

Just a reminder to bring in a hay sample if you would like to participate in the free NIRs forage testing at this year's conferences. Bring a full bale of hay that can be easily cored. If you do not have room for a full bale, a portion of a bale can be brought, but should be tied and as compressed as possible to help with coring.



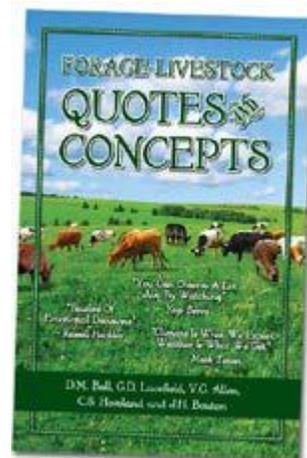
Forage News Quote of the Month

From: Kentucky Forage and Grassland Council

"You Can Observe a Lot Just By Watching"

~ Yogi Berra

Yogi Berra said this about baseball, but the concept also applies to pastures, including determining when application of fertilizer should be considered. Because most nutrients consumed by livestock are recycled, deposits of dung and urine result in spots where plants exhibit increased growth and usually have a darker green color. The decision to apply fertilizer should be based mainly on soil test results and the extent to which pasture forage is needed and can be utilized, but when such spots are conspicuous, it should give a livestock producer a clue regarding the growth response that would occur if the right type and amount of fertilizer was applied.



To purchase the Forage-Livestock Quotes and Concepts book, contact KFGC at ukforageextension@uky.edu.



American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Meeting to be Held January 22-24

The American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC) will host its Annual Meeting January 22-24, 2016 at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center in Roanoke, Virginia. The theme is “Turning Grass into Ca\$h: Opportunities in Grassland Agriculture.”

The 2017 AFGC Conference will begin with a tour highlighting two outstanding operations, Tuck Farm and Dawn Dairy. Tuck Farm will focus on their winter grazing program and Dawn Dairy will focus on their perennial forage base establishment. Both stops will provide attendees with a first-hand look at excellent forage management practices.

The conference will feature workshops focused on restorative grazing, market opportunities, pasture based dairies, mob grazing, sheep production, and more. In addition to workshops, the conference offers scientific poster presentations; an outstanding exhibit hall representing seed, chemical, fencing and other industry companies and organizations; many networking opportunities; and several competitions such as the Forage Spokesperson, Emerging Scientist, Photo and Essay Contests.

According to AFGC President, Chris Agee, “we are extremely fortunate to have the guidance of producer and AFGC board member, Mark Kennedy serving as conference chair and Chris Teutsch and Matt Poore as program chairs. The entire 2017 planning team has put together an amazing program focused on the many facets of the forage industry providing value for everyone.”

There are over 60 educational opportunities over the two-day conference qualifying for CEU credit in the Certified Forage and Grassland Professional designation program offered by AFGC.

Details and registration are available on the web at www.afgc.org. Or, contact AFGC at 1.800.944.2342 for information or questions.

The American Forage and Grassland Council is an organization comprised of 22 affiliate councils with over 2,500 members and is the leading voice for economically and environmentally sound forage based agriculture. Founded in 1944, its primary objective is to bring producers, educators, scientists, and industry professionals together to promote and advance forages in agriculture. Contact AFGC, PO Box 867, Berea, KY 40403. Telephone 800.944.2342. Fax 859.623.8694. E-mail info@afgc.org. www.afgc.org.



Mountains-to-Bay Grazers Alliance Supports Farmers Interested in Grazing

Thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), a new alliance is providing farmers with information, resources, and assistance to expand livestock grazing efforts in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Mountains-to-Bay Grazers Alliance includes CBF, Virginia Forage and Grassland Council, Future Harvest–Chesapeake Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, University of Maryland Extension, Red Barn Consulting, Maryland Grazers Network, Maryland-Delaware Forage Council, and Capital Resource Conservation and Development Area Council, Inc. The grant will allow the Grazers Alliance to support farmers interested in grazing, and so increase the number of pasture-based livestock operations in the Bay

watershed portions of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

A key element of the program is farmer-to-farmer mentoring. The grant will expand outreach and technical assistance for farmers who graze livestock in the three states and provide opportunities for current and new grazing farmers to share information. The program will include activities such as two-day Grazing Schools and field days, an annual planning calendar, a regional conference, a quarterly electronic newsletter, and an update of the "Amazing Grazing Directory" for direct marketing of grass-fed products. The hope is to create a regional network of more than 250 grazers in the three targeted states, as well as enrolling an additional 1,400 acres in pasture farming.

Another component of the grant is to estimate nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediments loads; greenhouse gas emissions; soil health; and economic benefits of eight farms that convert from traditional management approaches to more intensive grazing practices. This will result in a summary of water quality and carbon-credit generating potential as well as farmer attitudes toward these types of markets.

Seldom has one farming system provided so many benefits in such a variety of areas—farm profitability, global and local environmental health, soil health, and sustainability. Grazing's time has come, and its expansion across the region will be good for us all.

To learn what resources are available to farmers under this grant, please contact the appropriate person in your state:

In Maryland

Michael Heller, Chesapeake Bay Foundation,
mheller@cbf.org
Jeff Semler, Washington County Extension,
jsemler@umd.edu

In Pennsylvania

Capital RC&D at 717-241-4361
Red Barn Consulting at 717-393-2176

In Virginia

Alston Horn, Chesapeake Bay Foundation,
ahorn@cbf.org or 540-487-9060
Matt Booher, Virginia Cooperative Extension at
540-245-5750

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Tips to Cutting Your Winter Feed Losses

It's estimated that winter feed makes up more than half of the annual cost of keeping a beef cow in some regions of the country. That being the case, maximizing the feeding value and minimizing the waste in harvested feed are important considerations.

“For starters, hay stored outside usually has more spoilage during storage and lower palatability than hay stored inside”, says Robert Kallenbach, University of Missouri Extension agronomist. And that presents further challenges in feeding. “Cattle will waste a greater percentage of poor-quality hay than they will of good-quality hay. Animals fed high-quality hay early in the season will often refuse poor-quality hay when it is offered later.”

Research conducted at the University of Tennessee a few years ago studied hay losses in storage. Here's how various storage methods of large round bales fared in the UT research:

- Stored on the ground with no cover, 37% loss.

- Stored on tires with no cover, 29% loss.
- Stored on the ground and covered, 29% loss.
- Stored on tires and covered, 8% loss.
- Net wrapped and on the ground, 19% loss.
- Stored in the barn, 6% loss.

The research shows that losses can be significant depending on the type of storage used. The data also suggest that storage losses occur from moisture getting into both the top, and bottom of the bales. Thus, if hay can't be stored inside a barn, the next best option is to at least get the hay off the ground and under a tarp or plastic cover.

In addition, Kallenbach suggests the following steps to reduce losses:

- 1) Feed hay in small amounts or in a feeder to minimize waste. When fed a limited amount of hay at a time, cattle have less opportunity to trample and soil the hay. Feeding hay in a rack or a "hay ring" also limits the opportunity that animals have to trample or soil hay, and will reduce waste substantially if you intend to provide more than a day's worth of hay at one time.
- 2) Feed hay in well-drained areas.
- 3) If you intend to feed hay in a single location all winter, provide a footing such as crushed gravel or concrete to help minimize mud. Perhaps more cost effective is to move hay-feeding areas around the farm to minimize the damage to any one area of the pasture.
- 4) Feed hay stored outside before hay stored inside.

Source: Beef Magazine



Narrow Window for Frost Seeding Forages

Forage seed can be broadcast without tillage in late winter (a.k.a. frost seeding) on the soil surface of fall-sown cereals or existing forage stands. Success is greatest when the ground is freezing and thawing daily and the soil surface is moist. Freezing and thawing action (honeycombing of the soil surface with ice crystals) along with rain will cover seed with soil and create good seed-to-soil contact. The window of time when the soil is freezing and thawing on a daily basis is frequently very narrow, so producers need to be prepared and ready when the time is right. Early morning frost seeding is recommended before the soil surface begins to thaw. If the soil surface is slimy then stop and wait until the next morning when the soil is frozen again. Frost seeding works best when pasture and hay stands are thin and where the field was heavily grazed or harvested the previous fall. Red and white clover establish better via frost seeding than most other legumes. Other legumes and timothy can be frost seeded with slightly less success than clovers. Grasses, other than timothy, are difficult to establish with frost seeding because the seeds are large and fluffy. For more information on successful forage crop establishment see Penn State Publication, Agronomy Facts 49 at <http://cropsoil.psu.edu/extension/facts/agfacts49.cfm>.

Key points to remember:

- Frost seeding is generally less successful than seeding in rows with a no-till drill.
- Frost seeding is successful only during short periods when soil and climatic conditions are right.

Source: Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council, Winter 2016 Newsletter.



Forage Bits is a publication of the Maryland-Delaware Forage Council. It is compiled and edited by Ben Beale, Agricultural Extension Educator-St. Mary's Co. and Richard Taylor, Extension Agronomist, University of Delaware. Please send any comments, questions or submissions to Ben at the St. Mary's Extension Office: PO Box 663, Leonardtown, MD 20650, fax 301-475-4483, phone 301-475-4484 or e-mail at bbeale@umd.edu

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To join the MDFC, send your name and a check for \$25, payable to the Maryland-Delaware Forage Council, to Kenneth Stonesifer, 141 Hilltop Drive, and Chestertown MD 21620. The Maryland-Delaware Forage Council is an affiliate of the American Forage and Grasslands Council. Members receive two publications-the Forage Leader and the Hay and Forage Grower.