

The Forager

Spring 2016

IOWA
FORAGE AND
GRASSLAND
COUNCIL

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

National Forage Week
June 19 - 25, 2016

Hay Expo
June 22-23
Boone, IA

IFGC Annual Meeting
January 19-20, 2017
Alumni Center, Ames

AFGC Annual Meeting
January 22-24, 2017
Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center
Roanoke, VA

Another Conference Under the Belt

On January 21-22, 2016 the IFGC held its 2016 Annual Conference at the ISU alumni center in Ames, IA. Featured speakers include grazing consultant Jim Elizondo and forage specialist Bruce Anderson. Two producer panels and other Iowa speakers will address topics including grazing cover crops, stockpiling forages, managing alfalfa, land use decisions, strategic supplementations and contract grazing.



Thanks to support from the North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, the Iowa Beef Center, and many forage partners of IFGC 2016 was a great event! *More photos on page 2.*

Thank You to Our 2016 Sponsors!



Grants Available for Teaching in 2016

Your IFGC education committee continues to fund the education grants program in 2016. This program is designed to assist with funding forage education activities in Iowa. A common use of the education grant program is helping fund refreshments at pasture walks and field days. Many other sponsors will not fund these items. IFGC, however, may fill in this needed area. The IFGC education grant program typically funds a dozen or more projects each year in as many counties. Hundreds of people attend these IFGC sponsored events each year.

The applicant or applicant's organization must be a member of IFGC to be eligible. The applicant must be approved for funding prior to the event. They must agree to recognize IFGC as one of the sponsors of their event and distribute IFGC membership applications to their audience. Approved events may submit bills for reimbursement up to a maximum of \$100 per event. If you have a forage-based educational event coming up this year and need funding assistance, please consider your IFGC as a sponsor and apply for an IFGC Education Grant. For a copy of the application, contact Pat Wall at 515-450-7665 or via email patwall@iastate.edu.



2016 Conference Wrap Up

by: IFGC

On the first day the evening session was paired with a dinner catered by Hickory Park, and discussions on current beef and grazing topics in Iowa. During the annual meeting on January 22, the Livestock/Forage Producer award was presented to Ryan Herman who then spoke about the Herman operation. We hop everyone enjoyed their time at the Annual Conference and IFGC Annual Meeting.

Please enjoy these photos from the conference. More can be found on www.IowaForage.org.



Educational Materials and Opportunities

by: Iowa Beef Center

MATERIALS

Three new publications available for beef producers. All are available as free pdf downloads through respective links.

1. Beef and Dairy Cattle Vaccination Programs (IBC 111) Grant Dewell, ISU Extension Beef Veterinarian and Patrick Gorden, Senior Clinician, ISU Veterinary Diagnostic and Production Animal Medicine Vaccination is an important component of control and prevention of these diseases. Individual herd circumstances, including disease history, biosecurity, management, housing, and other factors, affect the specific vaccination programs in any beef operation. Vaccination programs should be developed in cooperation with the herd veterinarian.

2. Making the Switch to Baleage (IBCR 202) Patrick Gunn, ISU Extension cow-calf specialist, and Joe Sellers, ISU Extension and Outreach beef program specialist Making hay in the Midwest can present multiple challenges. Baling wet or rained-on hay and using outdoor hay storage can contribute to reduced forage and feeding quality. Feed costs in the cow-calf sector are often greater than 50% of total production costs, with the largest proportion of that feed cost derived from forage expenditures.

3. Spring Grazing Cover Crops (Iowa Learning Farms publication) Iowa Learning Farms, Practical Farmers of Iowa, ISU Extension and Outreach, Iowa Beef Center For many livestock producers, cover crops and winter grazing go hand-in-hand; however, perhaps the most valuable time for grazing cover crops is in the spring. Winter annual cereal grains such as rye, wheat, and triticale grow fastest and provide the most tonnage in the early spring, before cool-season grasses start to grow.

OPPORTUNITIES

Grassroots Grazing sessions. Preregister to ensure meal and materials availability. No cost. Start dates for these locations: Chariton, March 22 and Mount Pleasant, April 14.

Get BQA certification on your schedule -- and do it online. Boehringer Ingelheim, Inc. and the beef checkoff-funded Beef Quality Assurance program offers online certification now through April 15, 2016. This opportunity is open to all beef and dairy producers, veterinarians, allied partners, agricultural educators, and students. Go to www.BIVIBQA.com and choose a category, then enter BIVIBQA for the payment code. For more information, contact Doug Bear, Iowa's BQA Coordinator at doug@iabeef.org or at 515-296-2305.

Grazing Refresher for Spring

by: Scott Wohltman, Agronomist—LaCrosse Seed

It's a common mistake to "release the hounds" as soon as grazing areas green up in the spring. Because most grasses produce more than 60% of their annual yield during the spring season speaks to the importance of managing this growth in the spring to extend the production throughout the year and for seasons to come. Here's a couple tips to help improve your chances of season-long success:

- Shorten your grazing rotation this time of year – The University of Kentucky recommends shortening a normal 4 week rotation down to 2 weeks in the spring. Moving livestock quickly allows animals to graze, but only remove the top couple inches of growth. Among other things, this often allows for the grazing of all the paddocks before seed head formation. This method also allows for grazing some species a little sooner than usually recommended because of limited removal and quick regrowth.
- Ideal grazing heights – Under most situations, following the proper grazing heights to begin AND END cycles will result in stronger performance during the remainder of the year and longer perennial persistence. The table below shows the beginning and ending grazing heights for some of the more common species used across the Midwest.

Species	Plant height (inches)	
	Start grazing	Stop grazing
Tall-growing cool-season grasses orchardgrass, quackgrass, reed canarygrass, smooth bromegrass, tall fescue, and timothy	8–10	4
Tall-growing legumes alfalfa, alsike clover, birdsfoot trefoil, kura clover, ladino clover, and red clover	8–10	4
Ryegrasses Italian and perennial	6–8	2
Short-growing cool-season grasses and legumes Kentucky bluegrass and white clover	4–6	2
Warm-season grasses big bluestem, indiagrass, sorghum/sudangrass, and switchgrass	12–14	4–6

Table taken from Pastures for Profit: a Guide to Rotational Grazing from University of Wisconsin Extension

- Consider adding more livestock / increase stocking rates – The approach of adding more animals may not be feasible in some cow/calf operations, but consider situations where fall calving is employed. In these setups, calves could be kept on the farm a little longer to take advantage of the extra growth. Also, now more than ever is the time to think about increasing stocking rates. Be careful to not overgraze, but those acres not being utilized in rotations can now be used to stockpile additional hay.



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