

The Forager



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS:

**IFGC Annual Meeting
January 18, 2018**
ISU Alumni Center, Ames, IA

**PFI Annual Conference
January 19-20, 2018**
Scheman Building, Ames, IA

**AFGC Annual Meeting
January 14-17, 2018**
Crowne Plaza, Louisville, KY



iowaforage.org

SAVE THE DATE! 2018 IFGC Conference

The 2018 IFGC Conference has a great lineup of speakers for our attendees again this year! Dr. Hugo Ramirez, ISU, will discuss "Corn silage quality", Dr. John Grabber, USDA-ARS, will cover "Establishing alfalfa in silage corn", and Kathy Voth and Rachel Gilker from On Pasture breaks down "When to Spend Your Money: Fake Science or Good Practice" and that is just before lunch.

IFGC will provide lunch during our annual meeting and award recognition. Directly to follow lunch is a producer panel, Kathy and Rachel will present on "Will Grazing Save the Planet?" and our afternoon breakout sessions.

Afternoon breakout sessions include: Adam Janke, ISU, covers "Grazing management for wildlife," Doug Peterson from NCRS discusses "Soil Health," Joe Sellers, ISU, will cover "What are the multiple benefits of managed grazing?", and last (but not least) Dr. Garland Dahlke from the Iowa Beef Center explores "Using BRANDS to stretch feed and forage supplies following a drought."

You will not want to miss our line up of speakers this year. Please download the registration form on

IowaForage.org. Registration deadline is Thursday, January 11, 2018.

We are excited to provide the industry with such a comprehensive learning opportunity.

Your registration includes both morning and afternoon sessions, lunch, IFGC annual meeting, and networking opportunities with speakers and attendees.

Remember! The 2018 IFGC business meeting is being held during lunch on January 18, 2018. Please join us for the whole day and enjoy member meeting and awards recognition.

Pricing: \$40/Member (IFGC and PFI)
\$60/Non-members

Online Registration: IowaForage.org

Mail Registration: Send check payable to Iowa Forage and Grassland Council to 900 Des Moines Street, Des Moines, IA 50309

Questions? Contact IFGC 515-262-8323 or email Joan O'Brien - joano@agribiz.org



Kathy Voth, editor Rachel Gilker, editor

Register Online Today! Visit IowaForage.org - Deadline Jan. 11, 2018

Congratulations on Your Retirement

In September, the Department of Animal Science at the Iowa State University celebrated the career and contributions of Dr. Daniel G. Morrical.

publications, 73 experiment station reports and over 250 Extension handouts or popular press articles.

Dr. Morrical joined the Iowa State University staff in 1984 as Extension Sheep Specialist after completing his doctorate degree at New Mexico State University. At Iowa State University, he has been responsible for educational programs in all areas of sheep production, ranging from wool, genetics, nutrition and marketing. In addition, Dr. Morrical has been the principal researcher with sheep flock at the McNay Research Farm located in Chariton, IA. He has been the co-author of 27 papers in scientific journals, 70 extension





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Beautiful 2017 Pasture Walk in Bedford, IA

On Thursday, August 3, 2017, the Taylor County SWCD, Kurt Rowan, and Paul Ackley hosted a Pasture Walk south of Bedford. Partnered with Iowa Learning Farms and sponsored by Iowa Forage and Grassland Council, the event began at Kurt Rowan's pasture at 5:00 pm. Rowan introduced his cattle operation, his rotational grazing, and discussed his artificial inseminating (AI) synchronization. Joe Sellers and Chris Clark (ISU Beef Specialists) provided discussion on fescue, pasture system management, and animal health. The evening continued with dinner at the Ackley farmstead shop provided by the Taylor County Cattlemen. During dinner, Erin Ogle (Project Coordinator) spoke about the Water Quality Initiative (WQI) and what opportunities are available for Taylor County growers. More than 30 Taylor County producers are participating in this WQI project to help seed down marginal acres within the County. Approximately 300 acres are being planned to be seeded by the end of 2017. This includes pasture, hay, or a cover crop soil builder. After dinner, Paul Ackley showcased his pasture and cover crop grazing operation. The program concluded by 8:00 pm after some good discussion regarding grazing, conservation, water quality, and ways to help improve pasture health.

The event brought an attendance of approximately 60 people and very positive feedback for another field day. As a result, the Taylor County SWCD will be looking at hosting another field day in 2018, highlighting agriculture, conservation, and the WQI project.



Above & Left: Field day attendees viewing Kurt Rowan's pasture system while speaker, Joe Sellers discusses topics including fescue and rotational grazing.



Below: Host, Paul Ackley discusses the importance of cover crop grazing and the benefits it can provide to an operation.

Why Beef Sustainability Requires Grazing Management

by: Byran Weech, Barenbrug USA , bryanweech@gmail.com

Sustainable beef has been defined as beef that is produced in such a way that is environmentally sound, financially viable, and socially responsible (see www.grsbeef.org). Nowhere in the beef value chain do these factors come together to affect sustainability as much as it does with grazing.

Grazing Effect on Sustainability

Sustainability Area	Grazing Positive Affects (Adaptive Planned Grazing)	Grazing Negative Affects (Overgrazing)
Environmentally Sound	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequesters Green House Gases (Carbon, Nitrogen) • Increases Soil Health • Increases Water Infiltration • Protects Water Quality • Protects Open Space & Wildlife Habitat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depletes Soil Nutrients • Causes water Contamination (sediment, pathogens) • Contributes to Invasive Species • Damages Wildlife Habitat • Contributes to Erosion
Financially Viable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to Lower Cost of Production • Provides Least Expensive Feed Source resulting in better cash flow • Contributes to Profitability and increase land value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contributes to high cost of production & dependence on purchase feed • Minimizes profitability • Lowers carrying capacity • Contributes to animal health issues resulting in lower reproduction
Socially Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides Goods & Services (ecosystem services) – Clean water, carbon sequestration, wildlife habitat, open space etc. • Contributes to Food Security • Builds vibrant communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes negative social impacts such as contaminated water, depleted soil fertility, diminished wildlife populations • Farm & ranch failure leading to depletion of community resources • Animal Health & Welfare issues

With few exceptions grazing is the singular common practice that every animal in the beef value chain has participated in, and given the impacts both positive and negative across the range of sustainability issues (see table), every beef value chain participant from the smallest producer to the largest retailer should be keenly aware of the need of the beef industry to be good stewards of the land.

Need for Planned Grazing

Adaptive Planned Grazing Management is the key to better environmental stewardship. Adaptive Planned Grazing is an approach to management that considers the needs of the forages including a plants response to grazing, and soil health that is influenced by the nutrient (carbon and nitrogen primarily) and water cycles, and the importance to monitor responses and adapt/change manage as needed. Adaptive Planned Grazing dictates that a pasture is grazed when the forages in that pasture are prepared to endure the stress of grazing, and then the plants are allowed adequate rest after grazing to fully recover before being grazed again. Adaptive Planned Grazing monitors progress to ensure the grazing plan is having the intended result, and when things aren't going as planned changes are made (adapted) to ensure success. The saying "you manage what you measure" applies nowhere better than to grazing management.

Grazing to Improve Sustainability

The single greatest thing the beef industry can do to increase sustainability is to improving grazing management. From the smallest farmer grazing a handful of cows to the largest ranch grazing thousands of head, the beef industry will be no more sustainable than the collective average health of the land that supports the beef industry. Land health is the singular thing that allows the beef industry to subsist. When beef value chain participants who support beef sustainability efforts realize this and focus resources on such things as supporting grazing schools, range schools, ranching practicums that teach grazing management and monitoring, grassland and grazing coalitions etc. the sustainability of the beef industry as a whole will increase tremendously, at a much quicker pace than otherwise possible.

The entire industry from major retailers who have publically announced their expectation that beef be sustainably produced to local cattlemen organizations who support the thousands of beef producers who are making key decisions everyday concerning how to manage the land, should have land stewardship (grazing) as a key focal area if they want to influence continuous improvement of beef sustainability.

Why a Land Focus?

The beef industry is in separately connected to the land. This is the industries greatest strength, and its greatest point of vulnerability. Anyone following the multitude of lawsuits concerning the grazing of public lands understands the risk to the industry. Given the negative impacts that improper grazing can produce, it is critical that good grazing management is utilized. However, what people using litigation in an attempt to ban grazing don't realize is that in a large portion of the U.S. (certainly in the regions where large herds of bison and elk once grazed) grazing is an essential component of healthy grasslands.

Importantly, beef can be produced on land that isn't suited for other food production, while using self-renewing resources (grass) that requires few inputs except sunlight, water, nutrients (already in the environment), and adequate rest after grazing. This is a miraculous process, which is a self-sustaining system when managed properly. However, it is also a delicate process that if managed improperly has detrimental results causing a subsequent reduction in sustainability. There is opportunity for continuous improvement in the area of land stewardship, and as stakeholders work together to support the research, and information dissemination that allows continuous improvement in grazing management, there will be great stories to share concerning how the beef industry is contributing to a healthy plant, healthy food secure people, and financially healthy families and communities.



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