



THE FORAGER

SPRING EDITION

MARCH 2019

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Education Grant Program Continues in 2019

One of Iowa Forage & Grassland Council's (IFGC) goals as an association is to facilitate educational activities.

Continuing in 2019, the IFGC Education Grant Program will fund local educational events. This program is designed to assist with funding forage education activities in Iowa including forage field days, informational meetings, and pasture walks.

The funds may be used to reimburse expenses for materials, refreshments, speaker expenses or similar items. IFGC often helps with

refreshments if needed as some sponsors may not fund that particular need. Please detail out this need in your request.

Eligibility & Requirements:

- The applicant or applicant's organization must be a member in good standing
- The applicant or applicant's organization must have funding request submitted prior to the event date
- Approved applicants are asked to recognize IFGC as a sponsor at the event
- Applicant must distribute IFGC membership

applications to their audience during the event

If you have a forage-based educational event coming up this year and need funding assistance, consider applying for an IFGC Education Grant Program. Members may apply for up to \$100 for reimbursable expenses. Please apply well in advance of your event.

Questions? Contact the IFGC Educational Committee Chair Pat Wall, 515-450-7665 or email patwall@iastate.edu.

Annual Convention Thrives In November Reset



Pictured above: Jim & Dawn Gerrish

The Iowa Forage and Grasslands Council has returned the annual meeting and conference to Des Moines! The 2018 conference was held on November 26-27. Featured speakers included renowned grazing consultant Jim Gerrish, and Byron Shelton, Senior Program Director of the Savory Institute.

The event started with a bus tour of central Iowa farms that are grazing cover crops, sponsored by Fall Grazing Cover Crops project

funded by the North Central Extension Risk Management Education Center, the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Award Number 2015-49200-24226, and the Iowa Beef Center. An evening session followed the tour featuring a producer panel discussion on cover crops, and presentations by Gerrish and Shelton.

The Tuesday agenda included a more in depth session by Gerrish and Shelton, as well as other breakout sessions on grazing, wildlife

and conservation and other production topics.

Other speakers included: Nathan Maternach a producer from Cascade, Iowa; Paul Ackley a Talor County farmer from Bedford, Iowa; AJ & Kellie Blair 4th generation producers near Dayton, Iowa; Denise Schwab a Beef Specialist at ISU Extension; Joe Sellers a recently retired Beef Field Specialist at ISU Extension; Elyssa Trejo from Corteva Agriscience; Joe McGovern, the President of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation; and Dr. Adam Janke an Extension Wildlife Specialist at ISU.

Check back each fall online at iowaforage.org to learn more about our annual conference!

THANK YOU IFGC SPONSORS



Incorporating Annual Forages Into Your Grazing Rotation

by: Erika Lundy
IFGC Board Member
ISU Extension, Beef Specialist
– Southwest Iowa

If you've managed to hold onto your cow herd after the last several months of excessive cold, snow, mud, and now flooding coupled with record high hay prices, forage management should be a priority for you this year.

With continued pressure on extending the grazing season with limited pasture acres, interest in integrating annual forages into the row crop rotation has been on the rise. Typically, this includes planting a cool-season annual followed by a warm-season annual.

Cool-season annual grass species include small cereal grains such as cereal rye, oats, wheat, triticale or barley. While some of these are typically

thought of being planted in the fall, there are also spring varieties that allow for late spring to early summer grazing.

Once the cool-season annual has been grazed or harvested mechanically and properly terminated, warm-season annuals can be planted in the late spring or early summer. Most common warm-season species for grazing include sudangrass, pearl millet, and sorghum-sudangrass. These summer annuals also make a great renovation tool for winter feeding areas or sacrifice paddocks and aid in protecting the bare soil, reducing weed pressure, and providing additional forage.

Warm-season annuals provide a mid- to late-summer grazing opportunity, which coincides with mid-summer slumps in our standard cool-season

pastures. If planted early enough and managed carefully, many summer annuals can tolerate grazing two to three times. Likewise, warm-season annuals planted in the summer are a great opportunity for stockpiling and grazing in the fall, allowing pastures to recover before turnout on crop residue.

Of course, moisture levels and temperature impact success, but typically, 30 to 45 days post-planting, annuals will be ready to graze. Especially with tall warm-season annuals, forage waste due to trampling can be high, so implementing strip grazing management can help minimize waste.

If planting summer annuals in a large area and utilizing strip grazing, the last paddocks cows gain access to may become mature, and forage quality will

start to diminish. Therefore, staggering plant dates can help keep forage vegetative and allow for more efficient forage utilization.

High nitrates or prussic acid may be a concern when grazing annual forages, so timing of grazing is important. It's recommended sudangrass be at least 15 inches tall prior to grazing and sorghum-sudangrass be at least 18 inches tall. The risk of prussic acid poisoning in pearl millet is low.

Once the summer annual has been removed, planting a cool-season, small grain species in September or early October that will overwinter will increase the opportunity for a nice stockpiled area for calving the following spring.

Water; An Essential Nutrient for Grazing Animals

by: Jeff Matthias
IFGC President
NRCS, State Grassland
Specialist

Water. It is essential for all things living. As spring gets under way, frost-seeding of pastures is finishing up, drilling new and interseeding pastures are just around the corner, and fertilizer is being applied. Many graziers are readying pastures for grazing with the other essentials for a great grazing season, but have you looked at the drinking water available for your livestock?

Water for livestock meeting these three requirements will improve pasture forage utilization:

1. Adequate Quantity
2. Adequate Quality
3. Adequately Distributed

QUANTITY

Water quantity is essential for the livestock and it varies with the air temperatures. Beef cattle (lactating cows and bulls) can need between 15 and 25 gallons per day, with the 25 gallons needed when temperature is in or near the triple digits.

Lactating dairy cows can need even more, towards 40 gallons per day. Sheep and goats are in the two to four gallons per day range. These numbers make it easy to figure daily, weekly, monthly, or seasonal needs for the livestock. If access to a perennial flow stream, municipal/rural water system, well water, pond water, or spring; the needed quantity is usually available.

Some wells, springs or even municipal/rural water may not supply water at a fast-enough rate for peak demand requiring storage tanks. The storage tanks will slowly fill with water; when the herd is drinking it will supply an adequate amount rate.

QUALITY

Water quality is generally adequate for livestock in Iowa. Livestock prefer high quality water, and municipal/rural water is among the highest quality water since it is tested and treated to meet human consumption standards. The local source of water for human consumption works for livestock. The local sources used by other livestock in the area will generally be adequate, such as ponds, springs, and creeks. Other sources can be variable and should be tested before being developed into a water source and occasionally thereafter.

Contamination can happen to both surface and ground sources of water. Consider the risks of excess chemicals and nutrients in the watershed when deciding on a source.

DISTRIBUTION

Water distribution in pastures is probably the least thought and most important aspect of efficient grazing. University of Missouri Beef Research Center determined that proper grazing utilization dropped off when cattle walk more than 800 feet to drinking water. In the perfectly square world, this equates to one tank centered in every 40 acres.

Most of our pastures and paddocks are not square and many times objects such as fenced off area or gullies impact travel paths, leading to needing additional watering facilities than one for each 40 acres.

Watering facilities also need to be able to supply ample water for the livestock when needed. Enough headspace for a percentage of the herd to drink at one time is essential. If the herd waters as a group during the summer and the watering facility is not in the open, plan for 10% of the herd to be able to drink at once.

Each grazing animal, no matter the species need between 18 and 24 inches of headspace at the tank. A 6-foot by 2-foot oval tank can have 8 head drink at once. A 6-foot diameter round tank can have 12 drink at a time. An 8-foot diameter tank allows 16 animals to drink at once. Many automatic waterers only allow two to three animals to drink at a time.

Herds water two to five times per day, assume an average of three times per day during average summer weather. If we use an average of 21 gallons per cow per day divided by the three watering events, each time the cow will drink seven gallons.

Cows can drink about 2 gallons per minute, so each cow will need about three and one-half minutes to drink. The entire herd would need 35 minutes if drinking space is available for 10% of the herd.

It is important that the lead cow is willing to wait that long, otherwise the last cows don't receive adequate water. With water being crucial for milk production or weight gain, inadequate supply will decrease production.

Wrapping this information together, most pasture systems can improve livestock watering to increase production of forage and livestock. Consider adding water infrastructure to your pasture.

For additional information, Missouri NRCS published a booklet Watering Systems for Serious Graziers that is available online. If you are interested in watering system or other pasture improvements, your local NRCS office can offer technical and financial assistance.

Visit nrcs.usda.gov and click "contact us" for a directory listing of local offices in your area.

REFER A MEMBER TODAY



YOUR IFGC IS AS STRONG AS OUR MEMBERSHIP. IF YOU KNOW OF AN INDIVIDUAL OR COMPANY THAT WOULD BENEFIT FROM A MEMBERSHIP. PLEASE HAVE THEM CALL 515-262-8323 IOWAFORAGE.COM

Emergency Forage Preparation

by: **La Crosse Seed**

Winter weather was especially rough in many areas of the Midwest, and many growers counting on spring forage could be in a bind. Depending on the region, livestock type, and forage source, livestock producers could be planning to augment forage stands as soon as possible.

USING WINTER CEREALS IN SPRING

It is also important to remember that livestock producers can use winter cereal grains in spring as well. These cereal stands can produce adequate pasture (more so than hay) in this calendar year, either by themselves or when augmenting existing stands.

When extra seed is available (for example, carried over from the fall before), growers can consider using cereal rye, winter triticale and even winter wheat. Throughout a majority of the country, these grains will produce only vegetative growth through the summer and potentially into fall. These cereals also regrow fairly well and would even work in rotational grazing systems, as long as the grazing cycles are not sooner than a month apart.

TIPS FOR SPRING-PLANTED WINTER CEREAL GRAINS:

- Begin grazing once the stand is at least 6-8" tall
- Keep seeding rates the same as if they were being

seeded in the fall for forage

- Fertility – as much as 50-100 pounds of actual Nitrogen would be incredibly beneficial, but consider split applications to help with management. Also keep in mind feeding risks associated with elevated nitrate levels.
- Cereal grains can be low in fiber (unlike brassicas, for example). Livestock could suffer from digestive issues until they get accustomed to the new feed type.

Lastly, when spring cereals are seeded by themselves it can make management a little more challenging, since they are genetically disposed to

go into reproductive mode - in other words, they want to produce seed. With that said, spring cereals like oats are much better than winter cereals when the goal is tonnage production early in the season.

Article originally published on "The Corner Post" by La Crosse Seed - <https://mailchi.mp/laxseed/the-corner-post-emergency-forage-preparation?sfns=mo>

About The Corner Post - The Corner Post is a periodic email series with timely forage tips from the agronomic experts at Forage First and La Crosse Seed

Sellers Receives 2019 Exceptional Service to Agriculture Award

by: **Wallaces Farmer**

Growing up on a farm in Lucas County in southern Iowa, Harris Joseph "Joe" Sellers — Iowa Master Farmers' 2019 Master Farmer Exceptional Service Award honoree — always wanted to be a farmer like his father. Their family had settled on the rolling land south of Chariton in 1852.

Sellers and brother Tom helped their parents, Harris and Mary Alyce, in a diversified livestock operation that had 100 farrow-to-finish sows, 100 beef cows and a 1,500-head ewe flock, which was possibly the largest in the state at that time. Sellers was on the state 4-H council and received a national sheep scholarship for college.



Photo from Wallaces Farmer: Pictured Joe Sellers. As an ISU Extension beef specialist, Joe Sellers covered 16 counties in south-central Iowa. During his 31 years with Extension, Sellers helped hundreds of producers improve their beef herds and farm management.

After graduating from Iowa State University in 1976 with an animal science degree, Sellers returned to the farm. But the farm crisis of the 1980s changed his plans. When his brother came back to the farm after his graduation from ISU in the early 1980s, the farm financial crisis was

worsening. Sellers decided it was time for off-farm employment.

HELPING FARMERS IMPROVE OPERATIONS

Sellers performed some farm management work for a while, and then applied to ISU

Extension. His first job in 1987 was covering two counties, Lucas and Monroe, as a general agriculturist.

"That meant assisting at two county fairs. It was a lot of hot work," Sellers says.

Through the years, he picked up a master's in ag education, more territory and additional job titles. After 31 years in Extension, Sellers retired last fall from his position as ISU Extension beef specialist for south-central Iowa. He was adept at recognizing producers' needs and developing educational programs in beef cow nutrition, genetics, reproduction and marketing, which helped hundreds of

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(continued from page 4) farmers improve their operations, says Dan Loy, ISU animal science professor, Extension beef specialist and director of the Iowa Beef Center.

Loy says Sellers established himself as a national leader in grazing and forage management education with the Greenhorn Grazing and Certified Graziers programs. He also trained young ISU Extension staff at the Sellers Grazing Boot Camp.

GRAZING, FORAGE MANAGEMENT

“Joe has been successful because he cares about people. He always put his clients first. That also made him a great mentor for young staff. He has left his mark on the beef industry in Iowa and helped shape a staff that will continue his excellent service well into the future,” Loy says.

For the last three years, Sellers has led work on the cow systems project, which looks at alternatives for cow-calf production by collecting data from 28 producers. A cow systems manual will be available this spring.

He also assisted ISU Extension beef specialist Byron Leu, who developed the Cow Herd Improvement Program Services for cattle producers. Technicians worked with producers one on one in ration analysis, breeding plans and records of cattle weights for performance programs.

CHARITON VALLEY BEEF

An important educational effort led by Sellers was the Chariton Valley Beef program. A focus group of producers in Albia wanted more carcass data on their cattle, so



they could learn about and participate in grid marketing as it was beginning to take hold. Sellers helped coordinate and get data on loads of fed cattle sent to Nebraska processing plants.

“At one time, we got carcass data back for 150 producers. But it was hard to get data to learn more about their cattle and make improvements,” Sellers says.

Randy Eddy, an Appanoose County cattle producer, was president of Chariton Valley Beef. He worked extensively with Sellers on the information-sharing project. “We had smaller producers who were finishing cattle, and we tried to get information back from the processors, so we could make adjustments in bull selection or feeding to produce more premium carcasses,” Eddy says.

“I’ve spent a lot of time with Joe, and I can’t think of a better ambassador for ISU Extension and agriculture. He gave unbiased information and always looked for the most cost-effective ways to operate. He had his own farm, and he knew what would or wouldn’t work,” Eddy says.

Sellers’ common-sense approach was also prized by Brian Peterson, retired USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service grassland specialist. He worked with Sellers on many grazing and watering systems in

southern Iowa and served with him on the Iowa Forage and Grassland Council.

“Every producer has a different knowledge base about grazing. Joe had the technical and practical knowledge to help people meet their goals. He was always willing to share and increase their understanding, so they could improve their management,” Peterson says.

MENTOR FOR YOUNGER STAFF

Sellers also focused on bringing young people into agriculture. He initiated a summer intern program partnering with the McNay Research Farm at Chariton. College students worked at the farm on research projects and helped Sellers at county fairs with youth livestock projects. Through the years, Sellers had more than 30 interns at the farm.

He was also a 4-H sheep superintendent at the Iowa State Fair for more than 20 years, helping thousands of kids with their sheep projects. “I was told it would be a two-year job, but I’m still helping out with the open class,” Sellers says.

As for other programs he’s proud of, Sellers lists a few: starting the Update for Veterinarians program, working with Dr. Jim Russell and students to recruit cooperators in the Rathbun Lake Watershed to conduct research about grazing impacts on streams and water quality, and using the Beef Rations Nutrition Software program to help cow-calf producers be low-cost and efficient.

What’s next for Sellers now that he’s turned in the keys to his ISU car and no longer drives 25,000 miles a year giving programs and checking on producers? He is returning to his first job — farming. He and his brother will continue to raise beef cows. All their land is in pasture or hay to protect the rolling hills and the water quality of the Rathbun Lake Watershed. He and his wife, Cindy, will enjoy the grandkids. He’ll have a lot to share with them.

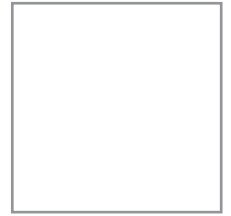
Original article published on <https://www.farmprogress.com/master-farmers/sellers-service-shines>

Pictured below: Joe Sellers facilitating the annual Greenhorn Grazing series at the ISU McNay Research Farm.





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2019-20 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

5TH ANNUAL NATIONAL FORAGE WEEK

June 16-22, 2019

www.nationalforageweek.org

IFGC ANNUAL MEETING & CONVENTION

November, TBA, 2019

AFGC ANNUAL MEETING

January 5-8, 2020

Greenville, South Carolina

Hyatt Regency



The Iowa Forage and Grassland Council exists to promote the profitable production and utilization of forage as a prime source of feed and products. To provide a forum and to stimulate cooperation among producers and workers from public and private sectors having mutual interests in forage production, utilization and marketing. To facilitate educational activities to help identify needs for research and education in forage production, utilization and to promote the value of forages in achieving good land use, soil and water conservation providing wildlife habitat and other benefits to Iowa agriculture. Visit WWW.IOWAFORAGE.COM for more information.