

Northey Encourages Farmers to Update Information on Iowa Hay and Straw Directory

Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey is encouraging Iowa hay and straw producers to register or update their listing on the Iowa Hay and Straw Directory. The directory lists Iowa producers with hay and straw for sale, as well as organizations and businesses associated with promoting and marketing quality hay and straw.

"The directory has been a great tool for both buyers and sellers and we hope farmers will take the time to review and update their information so that it remains a valuable resource," Northey said. "This directory can serve as a critical link for those producing hay and those looking to buy, so we encourage Iowans to take advantage of this free directory."

The listing is available to interested buyers throughout the nation, however only sellers from within Iowa can be included on the list.

Names are gathered throughout the year with added emphasis now that hay harvest has started. Sections within the Hay and Straw Directory include "Forage for Sale," "Forage Auctions," "Hay Associations," "Forage Dealers," "Hay Grinders" and "Custom Balers."

Farmers interested in listing should visit the Department's website at www.iowaagriculture.gov. An application form can be found by going to the "Bureaus" link and then selecting "Agricultural Diversification and Market Development." Then click on "Hay & Straw Directory" on the right side of the page under "Directories."

For those without internet access, please call the Hay/Straw Hotline at 800-383-5079. The Department will fax or send a printed copy of the application to be filled out.

The Department is also supporting the Iowa Crop Improvement Association's "Iowa Noxious Weed Seed Free Forage and Mulch Certification Program." Through this program Iowa forage and mulch producers can take advantage of many emerging market opportunities for "Certified Weed Free" products. For more specific information on this program producers should contact the Iowa Crop Improvement Association at 515-294-6921. More information can also be found by visiting www.iowacrop.org.

Now Taking Grant Applications for Forage Events By: Mark Fehseke, IFGC Education Chair, dibbikim@yahoo.com

The Iowa Forage and Grassland Council continues their long tradition of offering education grants to members holding pasture walks and other forage events. IFGC can help offset costs for refreshments, mailings, speaker fees and other associated costs. Applications up to \$100 will be considered in 2014.

Never applied for an IFGC grant before? You can do so by emailing me! Just send an email to dibbikim@yahoo.com and I will send an application. It doesn't take long to fill out the application and you can email it back to me. No stamps or running the application down to the post office! It's that simple.

You aren't a member? I can email a membership application as well!

We know how important forage events are to your community. IFGC is happy to help!

Send applications or information requests to Mark Fehseke, IFGC Education Chair, at dibbikim@yahoo.com.



The Forager

Summer 2014

900 Des Moines Street, Des Moines, IA 50309 // Phone: 515-262-8323 // Fax: 515-262-8960

IFGC OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Margaret Smith
Hampton
641-430-9241

VICE PRESIDENT

Luke Wilson
Monroe
319-883-1717

PAST PRESIDENT

Wayne Page
Corning
515-491-5508

SECRETARY

Vacant

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Joan O'Brien
Des Moines
515-262-8323

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY ADVISOR

Dan Morrill
Ames
515-294-2904

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mark Fehseke
Corydon
641-872-1350

Gene Gibbs
Promise City
641-874-5938

Ed Kordick
West Des Moines
515-225-5433

Brian Peterson
Corning
641-322-3228

Joe Sellers
Chariton
641-774-2016

John Sellers
Corydon
641-872-2657

Bert Strayer
Ankeny
800-810-1618

Rick Sprague
Corning
641-322-3116

\$1.4 Million Available for Water Quality Practices



Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey has announced that \$1.4 million in cost share funds are available to help farmers install new nutrient reduction practices. The practices eligible for this funding are cover crops, no-till or strip till, or using a nitrification inhibitor when applying fertilizer.

"We continue to hear from farmers interested in doing even more to limit nutrient loss and better protect water quality and these funds will help them try new voluntary science-based conservation practices on their farm," Northey said. "We were extremely pleased by the response last year from farmers and we are excited to have funds available again this year."

The cost share rate for farmers planting cover crops is \$25 per acre and for farmers trying no-till or strip till is \$10 per acre. Farmers using a nitrification inhibitor when applying fall fertilizer can receive \$3 per acre.

Any farmer not already utilizing these practices can apply for this assistance. Farmers are only eligible for cost share on up to 160 acres. The funds will be made available on Thursday, July 17, but farmers can immediately start submitting applications through their local Soil and Water Conservation District office.

Farmers that have already used these practices on their farm and are ineligible for this funding are still encouraged to visit their local Soil and Water Conservation District office to discuss other cost share funding that may be available.

"By allowing farmers to try new practices on a limited number of acres at a reduced cost we want to showcase the benefits of these practices and encourage farmers to incorporate them into their operation," Northey said.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship received \$4.4 million for the Iowa Water Quality Initiative in fiscal 2015. These funds will allow the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship to continue to encourage the broad adoption of water quality practices through statewide cost share assistance as well as more intensive work in targeted watersheds.

Last year in just two weeks over 1,000 farmers signed up for cost share funding to help implement new nutrient reduction practices on 100,000 acres. The state provided \$2.8 million in cost share funding was available to help farmers try a water quality practice for the first time and Iowa farmers provided at least another \$2.8 million to support these water quality practices.

Iowa Grazing Workshops with Jim Gerrish Planned for August

Workshops featuring grazing consultant Jim Gerrish will be held in different locations across Iowa August 18-22. Each day will include classroom discussions and pasture walks at local farms. Topics will include maintaining plan diversity to increase production and environmental benefits, using annual and perennial forage crops in your grazing system, and reducing cow costs with extended grazing.

Each local meeting also will include brief updates from Iowa Beef Center, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Practical Farmers of Iowa, and Iowa Cattlemen's Association staff on current Iowa forage and beef production topics.

Jim's experience includes over 20 years of beef-forage systems research and outreach while on the faculty of the University of Missouri, as well as 20 years of commercial cattle and sheep production on their family farm in northern Missouri. The University of Missouri - Forage Systems Research Center rose to national prominence as a result of his research leadership. His research encompassed many aspects of plant-soil-animal interactions and provides foundation for many of the basic principles of Management-intensive Grazing.

Jim was co-founder of the very popular 3-day grazing management workshop program at FSRC. These schools were attended by over 3000 producers and educators from 39 states and 4 Canadian provinces from their inception in 1990 through 2003 when Jim left MU. At least sixteen other states have conducted grazing workshops based on the Missouri model and Jim has taught in twelve of these states.

Sponsors of this series include the Iowa Beef Center of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, the North Central SARE program, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Practical Farmers of Iowa, the Iowa Cattlemen's Association, the Iowa Forage and Grasslands Council, the Southern Iowa Forage and Livestock Committee.

Registration fees should be made to Lucas County Extension prior to August 15, the local site coordinator or by calling Joe Sellers at 641-203-1270.

- **Registration fee - \$40 public, \$20 for current IFGC, ICA or PFI members**
- **Add \$10 per person per day if not pre-registered and paying at the door**
- **Gerrish grazing class is included in the 2014 Greenhorn Grazing and Certified Grazer registration fees (no added cost for registered participants in those courses).**

For more information contact Joe Sellers at 641-203-1270 or sellers@iastate.edu. Details on individual sites can be found at the iowabeefcenter.org website and in the enclosed flyer.

Harvesting Hay In Wet Weather

By: Hay & Forage Grower, www.hayandforage.com

Hay growers can control some aspects of harvesting in wet conditions. Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin Extension forage agronomist, offers a few tips.

First, if harvesting mature hay, growers should adjust their mowers' cutting heights so regrowth isn't damaged.

"If they cut it their normal height, it will cut off the regrowth and set back second-cutting yield," he explains. "You should check your field to see if there are new shoots coming up, and then to try to cut above that level." That could mean cutting 6" or higher, he warns.

Second, growers should spread harvested hay in wide swaths to dry more quickly.

"A lot of people are worried about putting it over wet soil. But at least you have the top portion intercepting sunlight. If you put it in a (narrow) windrow, only the surface of the windrow is drying and the inside stays as wet as when you cut it."

Third, Undersander suggests growers lighten their loads when hauling forage from fields.

"It may be time to take partial loads," he says. "It slows harvesting, but at least you're not leaving deep ruts in the fields."

Midwestern Hay Quality Down, Prices Likely To Rise

By: Jeff Holmquist, Hay & Forage Grower, www.hayandforage.com

Wet weather won't let up in parts of the Midwest. As a result, hay harvest is delayed and quality is suffering, say university specialists from Wisconsin, Minnesota and Missouri.

The good news: Prices for hay will likely remain strong and increase in the coming months, at least for dairy hay, says Dan Undersander, University of Wisconsin Extension forage specialist. With high-quality hay in short supply, dairy farmers are scrambling to stock up.

The continuing drought in California and the Southwest, and increasing beef-cow numbers in areas, will lead to even more competition for the Midwestern region's hay and put upward pressure on prices, he says.

Art Luedeke is a Greenwood, WI, grower struggling to get his hay up. A transplant from Minnesota, Luedeke found central Wisconsin drying conditions were more of a challenge until he bought a tedder.

"That's been a key part of my operation," he says. Normally, he teds just once before baling to shave a day off drying time, but that hasn't worked so far this year.

"It just seems like we can't get a break in the weather. I'm going out to ted hay this morning. This is the third time I've teded it. I turn it over and it's just as wet underneath as when I cut it. There hasn't been any sunshine or any kind of heat. I'm teding it now so that it doesn't mold on me."

On July 2, Luedeke had to drop down several gears to cut hay. "Hay is in full bloom and very tall due to the large amount of rain. The question now is if we will get enough time for it to dry before more rain moves in."

He typically markets about 6,000 small square bales to horse owners and an average of 300 big rounds to beef producers in the region each year.

Many Wisconsin growers have had a good season so far, Undersander says, but "we do have some terrible problems in some areas." He quoted National Weather Service data showing that last month was the fifth wettest June in Wisconsin history. Some areas received more than 6" of rain in the past two weeks.

"About 11% of first cutting has not been taken yet, so it's going to be low quality. People are scrambling to get into their fields," the forage specialist says.

Across the border in Minnesota, growers face similar challenges.

"We're taking things a day at a time," says Dan Martens, University of Minnesota Extension educator at Foley. "It's certainly hard for farmers to have their hands tied behind their backs with the weather."

In some wet areas, much of the first-crop hay was put up very late and at lower quality than normal. Heavy rains washed out fields in areas; in others, hailstorms caused damage.

Some farmers probably will produce one fewer hay cutting this season, Martens predicts, but optimism remains.

"They'll be hoping for the chance to catch some of the better-quality hay in the second- and third-crop harvests. With a little warmer and dryer weather now, some of it is starting to come around a little bit. Weather reports indicate that we might be in a more stable weather pattern. We'll see how it goes."

In Missouri, cool and damp weather has also slowed harvest.

The current weather, says Craig Roberts, Missouri University Extension forage specialist, is a mixed bag.

"For people who have not been able to cut hay at all, it's a curse," he says. "It just allows the plant to continue to mature. Yes, there is a lot of yield, but the quality is hurt."

But those who put up hay earlier consider the rain a blessing. It helped produce what looks to be a great-looking second cutting, Roberts says.

"For some of our producers who did clip, the yield was very low. But they are now getting a regrowth cut that is higher in quality and doesn't have many stems ... and there's more yield. They're going to see some nice hay."