

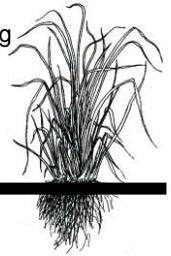


PENNSYLVANIA  
FORAGE and GRASSLAND  
COUNCIL  
www.forages.psu.edu

American Forage and  
Grassland Council  
Affiliate  
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# PENNSYLVANIA FORAGE and GRASSLAND NEWS



Volume 26, No. 3, Summer 2016

## Supporting Members of PFGC

Many businesses support the PFGC through their membership and involvement in many of the PFGC sponsored activities. Our supporting members for 2016 are:

AgChoice Farm Credit	Ampac Seed Co.
Barenbrug, USA	Chemgo Seeds
Delmhorst Inst.Co.	Dow AgroSciences
Ernst Conservation Seeds	Farmshine Publications
Fulton Bank-AG	Kings Agriseeds
Lancaster Farming	New Holland N.A. Inc.
Northampton County Seeds	Rohrer Seeds
Seedway, Inc.	Timac, USA. Inc.
W-L Research	

## Thank You Dick Hann for your service to the PFGC!

The PFGC officers, board, and members would like to extend a sincere appreciation to Dick Hann, former Executive Secretary/Treasurer for the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council! We appreciate your dedication and hard work, helping to build the foundation for a successful organization. Thank you for all that you have done for PFGC!

## 2016 Ag Progress Days

Dates and times for Penn State's Ag Progress Days:  
August 16, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.  
August 17, 9 a.m. – 8 p.m.  
August 18, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Located at the Russell E. Larson Agricultural Research Center, 2710 W. Pine Grove Rd, Pennsylvania Furnace, PA. **Visit our Hay Show Display in the Harrington Building!**

## Forage Variety Trials Report Available

The 2015 Penn State "Forage Variety Trials Report" is available, at your county extension office. It can also be downloaded from the web at:  
<http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/FreePubs/pdfs/uc068.pdf>

## 2017 Forage Conference

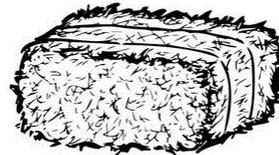
Plans are currently underway for the 2017 Forage Conference. Keep an eye out for updates and information in the next edition of Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland News!

## PFGC is now on Social Media!

Find us on Facebook by searching 'Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council' to keep up with updates and important links!



## Rule Change Notice - PFGC Hay Show at Ag Progress Days



This year, it will be required of all members wishing to exhibit hay at the APD Hay Show to be a member of the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council. Membership brochures are currently available upon request by contacting

Jessica Williamson at (814)865-9552 (leave a message with your full name, address, and phone number if Jessica is not available), or by contacting Terri Breon at (814)355-1912 or [tgbreon@breonconsulting.net](mailto:tgbreon@breonconsulting.net). Membership brochures will also be available at hay drop-off at the APD site.

## PFGC Hay Show at Ag Progress Days

As you make hay this year, pull a couple of your best bales and store them in a dry spot so that when Ag Progress Days rolls around you will have easy access to them. The Hay Show is located inside the Harrington Building at the end of East 5th Street. Hay samples delivered to Ag Progress Days on Tuesday, August 16 should be dropped off at the special **Hay Sample Drop-off Point** located along the East entrance to Ag Progress Days. **Deadline for sample delivery is 10:00 a.m. on August 16.**

***This year, a Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland membership is required to participate in the Hay Show. The opportunity to become a member will be available at the drop off site at APD, but if you are interested in joining before dropping off hay, or if you are planning to mail in hay samples, contact Jessica Williamson ([jaw67@psu.edu](mailto:jaw67@psu.edu) or (814-865-9552) to receive a membership brochure.***

## Rules

1. Entries officially close at 10:00 a.m., Tuesday, August 16, 2016. However, to facilitate handling of samples, exhibitors are urged to deliver their samples to the hay show building on Monday, August 15. Hay shipped or delivered prior to August 1 should be clearly identified as Hay Show Sample and addressed as follows:

Dr. Jessica Williamson  
Dept. Plant Science  
116 Ag. Sci. and Ind. Building  
Penn State  
University Park, PA 16802

2. **All participants entering samples in the Hay Show must be members of the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council.**

3. The hay shown must have been grown by the Exhibitor in Pennsylvania during 2016.
4. Exhibitors may enter in as many classes as they wish, **but no exhibitor shall have more than one entry in a class**, either in his own name, the name of the farm, or the name of some other person.
5. Exhibitors must attach an entry blank, giving name, address, county and class in which the exhibit is to be entered. Exhibitors can secure additional entry blanks at their County Agricultural Extension Office.
6. **Long hay from any bales** (small square, large round or large square) **that have been cured** (adequately dry). **An exhibit must consist of a bale section 4 to 6 inches thick, 12 inches high and 18 inches wide.** Thin or moist samples will be disqualified.
7. **Samples must be tied with twine.**
8. Judging will be based on both visual and chemical characteristics.
9. Unless disapproved by the exhibitor, samples will be stored for exhibit in the Hay Show at the 2017 Pennsylvania Farm Show.

**For more information, membership application, or Hay Show brochure, please contact Jessica Williamson at [jaw67@psu.edu](mailto:jaw67@psu.edu) or 814-865-9552.**

## Poor Establishment of Alfalfa

Poor establishment of spring seeding alfalfa has been widely reported across Pennsylvania and New York. The alfalfa germinated and emerged but then just seemed to stop growing. In some cases, six week old alfalfa was still in the unifoliate leaf stage. Then when the temperatures got warm, some of the plants grew out of it but others just aren't as thrifty as we would expect.

The unifying factor in these poorly establishing fields is timely planting, cold conditions, and some late frost. It appears that fields that were planted later avoided those conditions and are establishing fine. While some farmers report plants actually disappearing from the stand, other report that the plants are there but just not growing.

### What to do?

Control weeds. This has been a challenge because the alfalfa was too short to be treated with herbicides. On some of my research fields, we have resorted to chopping off weeds and alfalfa to get sunlight down into the alfalfa. Hopefully, this will stimulate the alfalfa to grow and provide a good harvest in July.

### Should you replant?

Not now. As we enter the hot and dry part of the summer it is not a good time to be trying to establish alfalfa. Keep the seed in the bag. Control the weeds and monitor the stand. If you have 15 plants/ft<sup>2</sup> at the end of July then there should be sufficient plants to justify keeping the stand. If you are below that plant density, then killing off the stand and replanting in August or early September is recommended. Alfalfa auto-toxicity is unlikely in these fields.

Source: Dr. Marvin Hall, Penn State

## The Lowdown on Cutting Height

Cutting height is important.

That said, not one size fits all. This is because the carbohydrate reserves for regrowth are located in different plant parts, depending on the species in question. It's also because not everyone has tabletop fields with no rocks.

Let's begin with alfalfa, the more complicated issue. It's a species that stores carbohydrate reserves below

ground in the taproot. This allows for a very close cutting height if so chosen. Cutting low (1 to 2 inches) results in more yield. A past Wisconsin study showed about a 0.5 ton bump in dry matter yield for each additional inch that alfalfa-cutting height was lowered from 6 to 2 inches over a three-cutting season. In a follow-up study, the difference was 0.13 ton per acre per inch for first-cut alone.

Though the overall quality of the forage was slightly better with the higher cutting height, the milk per acre values remained in favor of the lower cutting heights. The authors also cited the advantage (for dairy cows) of potentially lower potassium in the forage as more lower stem was harvested. Similar studies have been done in other states with confirming results.

Practically speaking, there is some downside to lower cutting heights. For many, there is the issue of rough fields and rocks. Low cutting heights might translate to wrenches being thrown and high machinery repair costs. There is also the issue of ash — or dirt. The odds go up for an elevated ash content as cutting height decreases, especially for coarse soils. Forage dry down may also be slower as the swath or windrow lays closer to the ground without being propped up by the higher stubble. Finally, with a shorter cutting height, more axillary buds are removed, though these are not as important as crown buds for subsequent regrowth.

In almost all cutting height studies for alfalfa, the final prognosis is to cut as low as practically possible in an effort to capture more yield. If that's your end game, then the decision is pretty clear. However, for most alfalfa producers, the desirable approach is probably to stick with the more conventional 3- to 4-inch cutting height and avert the previously mentioned downside factors.

### What if grass is involved?

Grasses, in general, are less tolerant of ultra-low cutting heights than alfalfa. Though it varies somewhat between species, regrowth is generated from above ground plant parts that, if removed, impede regrowth and stand longevity. Also, leaving some photosynthetic plant tissue aids in more rapid regrowth. Where pure grass or mixtures are involved, a minimum 3-inch stubble, preferably 4 inches, is generally recommended if the long-term persistence of the grass component is desired.

Source: Mike Rankin, Hay & Forage Grower

Pennsylvania



Richard Hann - Secretary Treasurer  
P.O. Box 355  
Hershey, PA 17033

## Stockpiling for Deferred Grazing

Stockpiling fall forage growth can be an effective way to extend the grazing season and reduce the need for stored feed costs.

After grazing, remove animals around August 1 and clip pastures to 3-4". At least 40 lb of nitrogen should be applied after clipping, to boost forage growth. Allow pastures to grow and accumulate for a minimum of 60 days, but 90 days would be most desirable.

Pastures can be grazed after growth has ceased into the winter. Stockpiled forages should be strip grazed, so trampling and waste can be kept to a minimum and animals have the opportunity to graze the best quality forage as possible.

In general, the forage quality of stockpiled forages will decline as the winter goes on, but will still remain at a quality greater than or equal to that which would have been if the forages were harvested as hay. A good rule-of-thumb is to allow one 1,000 lb animal unit 1 acre per 75 days of desired grazing.

Source: Dr. Jessica Williamson, Penn State

## PFGC Officers and Board

The following is a list of the current officers and Board of Directors of the PFGC. If you have questions, concerns or suggestions on how the PFGC could serve you better, please contact one of these people.

### Officers

President	Lamar Bomberger	(570) 412-6867
Vice President	Andrew Frankenfield	(610) 489-4315
Executive Director	Richard Hann	(717) 832-0127
Exec. Vice-Pres.	Jessica Williamson	(814) 865-9552
Secretary/Treasurer	Terri Breon	(814) 355-1912

### Board of Directors

#### Producer

Jeff Bloss	(570) 954-7327
Jesse Bitler	(610) 944-0541

#### Public

Andrew Frankenfield	(619) 489-4315
Suzette Truax	(717) 987-4272
Donna Foulk	(570) 992-2238

#### Industry

Lamar Bomberger	(570) 412-6867
Dave Hunsberger	(717) 436-9798

Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland News is published quarterly by the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council. Edited by Dr. Jessica Williamson

