



NEW AFGC AFFILIATE COUNCIL INFORMATIONAL PACKET

AMERICAN FORAGE AND GRASSLAND COUNCIL

PO Box 867
Berea, KENTUCKY 40403

AFGC AFFILIATE COUNCIL INFORMATION PACKET

So you're interested in organizing an American Forage and Grassland Council Affiliate? Congratulations! You are about to take a step which will greatly increase the emphasis which forage crops will receive in your state, region, or province. It is a simple fact that many people working together within an organizational framework can accomplish independently. If this was not the case, why would so many organizations exist?

The American Forage and Grassland Council is truly an organization on the move. Membership in all categories (individual, corporate, and state or provincial affiliates) are increasing steadily. In fact, the frequency of requests for information regarding the formation of new affiliate chapters has promoted the preparation of this packet.

It is interesting to note how organizations take on a momentum of their own once they are organized. The hurdle of formation is often the factor which precludes the existence of a highly worthwhile organization. The initial formation of an organization requires a farsighted leader (or leaders) who are willing to spend some time and energy on a cause they know in their heart (s) to be worthwhile.

The fact that you have taken the initiative to express interest in the formation of an AFGC affiliate in your state or province leads us to believe you are the right person or persons to take this step. Also, based on your experience in working with other persons who have taken this step, we believe you will find more support for this effort than you ever dreamed existed. The key is for someone to take the lead. We hope you will follow through on your idea, and we further hope that this informational packet on AFGC affiliate council formation will be helpful to you in doing so. It provides the following items which you can review to learn more about AFGC:

TIPS ON AFFILIATE COUNCIL FORMATION
LIST OF AFFILIATE COUNCIL ACTIVITIES
BROCHURE- GUIDELINES FOR ORGANIZATION AND OPERATION

TIPS ON AFFILIATE COUNCIL FORMATION

Getting Started

In an effort to obtain insight into what is involved in forming an AFGC affiliate, a questionnaire was recently sent to a number of persons who were instrumental in forming highly effective AFGC Affiliates. The information provided in the remainder of this document is based on the responses received.

Obviously, the first step in formation of an affiliate council is for someone or some group to decide that it needs to be done and that they will do it. Beyond this, there are a number of steps which our advisors mentioned as being necessary. They are as follows:

-Some individual must take the lead in organizing the effort. Often this is the Extension Forage Crops Agronomist at a Land Grant University, but it could be anyone interested in forage production and utilization. Some very effective AFGC Affiliates Chapters have been formed mainly through the efforts of producers, industry professionals or researchers.

-It is necessary to gain the support of a core group of “forage crop enthusiasts,” especially professional forage workers, regarding the need for an AFGC affiliate. This group needs to be dedicated to the forage industry and willing to share their time, energy, influence, and knowledge.

-The core group should develop an outline of objectives for the organization. Care needs to be taken to make this very broad in scope to avoid leaving out any segment of the forage industry. This will be very helpful in taking the next step.

-Once there is a consensus that it would be desirable to form an affiliate, and a set of objectives have been formulated, a joint effort should be made to notify as many persons as possible for the purpose of gaining their support and input. This should encompass all aspects of the forage industry including: researchers who do work supporting forages; good County Agents who are active in doing forage work; reliable representatives of the seed, fertilizer, chemical, and equipment industries; and representatives of other agencies such as the “blessing” of the agricultural administration in appropriate universities and/or research centers is often an essential ingredient.

Last but certainly not least, leading forage producers should be contacted. The support of a few producers who are true leaders has proven time and again to be a key in the formation of a strong and highly credible AFGC affiliate organization. It is likely that some of the persons contacted will have little input, but it is important to contact them in order to give them the opportunity to provide input and to prevent them from feeling “left out” of an important event.

-After a large number of contacts among appropriate individuals and organizations have been made, the core group should meet together to devise a strategy for formation of the Affiliate Council. Steps which should be taken at this point are: (1) assignment of the task of drafting a set of by-laws; (2) identification of persons to serve as the first set of officers and directors (be sure these persons are strong leaders which represent all facets of the forage industry); (3) planning of a campaign to recruit charter members; and (4) setting of a date for the organizational meeting.

-Hold the organizational meeting as planned and make sure it includes the scheduling of some worthwhile event or activity such as a field day to be held at some future date. Let the membership and all onlookers know from the outset that the organization will be one which is going to be active.

Pitfalls to Avoid

The persons we contacted reported that, by and large, the formation on the AFGC affiliate went very smoothly and in many cases even exceeded expectations. However as in any human endeavor, there are potential problems which could occur which need to be avoided if possible. Suggestions from this group along these lines are as follows:

-It is possible that one group may want to control the organization. The way to avoid this is to be careful to include all sectors of the forage industry. Also, the organization needs to be set up in such a manner as to insure that a geographically broad spectrum of people all across the state, area, or province is involved.

-The situation should be avoided of having one person (the Extension Forage Crops Specialist, for example) actually run the Affiliate Council. The leadership needs to come from the council directors, with support from the Extension Forage Specialist and other forage professionals.

-Anytime a large number of people are contacted regarding almost anything, the odds are good that one, or perhaps a few, will express a negative attitude. This is human nature and you should not let it bother you. As long as the majority of people contacted are in favor of the formation of the council, you should proceed. Along these same lines, it is important to prevent persons from having a negative attitude (regardless of their position) from assuming a leadership role within the organization, especially the beginning years.

Timetable For Affiliate Council Formation

The persons we contacted generally indicated that it should take from six months to two years to lay the groundwork for the formation of a council. There are many factors which might affect the length of time it will actually take. However, several of the respondents indicated that it is better to take plenty of time to make certain the job is done right than to “rush into” formation when a less-than-adequate job of preparation has been done.

Is It Worth It?

The question which probably weighs heaviest upon the mind of someone considering forming an AFGC Affiliate is, “Is it really going to be worth my time and effort to take the leadership role in forming an AFGC Affiliate Council?” the best answer we can provide regarding this question is the fact that every person to whom we presented this question responded that: (1) much benefit had resulted to forage producers, to forage research, and to forage industry since the formation of the Affiliate in their state or province; and (2) if they faced the Affiliate Council formation question again, they would make the same decision.

Quotes from Experienced Affiliate Council Organizers

The following statements were volunteered by some of the persons responding to our survey. They provide great insight regarding the benefits of having an active AFGC affiliate. “Very few people know the value of forage crops or the forage industry, and there is no other organization which speaks for this vital part of the agricultural economy. Don’t wait for someone else to start an Affiliate Council- take the responsibility yourself. You won’t regret it.”- Professor Joe Burns, Extension Forage Specialist, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN

-“A state forage council provides a focal point for the diverse forage interests in the state. It is a source of leadership, new ideas, and support for all types of forage activities. It identifies needs and offers a means to concentrate resources to meet those needs. It is a sponsoring organization which can work closely with University educational and research programs.”- Dr. Harlan White, Extension Forage Specialist, VPI and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia.

-“It isn’t that difficult to form an AFGC affiliate. In fact, in many ways it was a lot of fun. Getting started is the hardest part. We are still a young organization, but we are getting stronger and doing more every year. Our state’s forage industry has definitely benefited from having an Affiliate Council. I’d certainly be willing to be involved in forming an Affiliate if I had to do it again.”- Dr. Fred Martz, USDA-ARS and Professor, University of Missouri-Columbia, Columbia. Missouri.

-“Having an active, aggressive Forage Council in a state will add sanction and speed to progress in a viable forage program. It will help to identify both research and service needs and help to publicize results. And with all branches of professionals working together as a unit, the same aggressive story of success is told to farmers and the general public throughout the area. It is a great way to get a lot of willing and anxious folks working on the same program at the same time.”- Warren C. Thompson, Consultant and National Forage Specialist, NAPB, Lexington Kentucky.

Postscript

The AFGC Office is interested in being of assistance in the formation of new Affiliate Councils. This includes answering specific questions you may have which are not covered in this packet, supplying additional information about the organization, or providing a representative of the national organization to participate in your organizational meeting. Please don’t hesitate to get in touch if we can be of further assistance.

AFGC
PO Box 867
Berea, KY 40403
800-944-2342



AMERICAN FORAGE AND GRASSLAND COUNCIL

The leader and voice of economically and environmentally sound forage focused agriculture

Application for Affiliate Membership

Date_____

Council Name_____

Address_____

Date Council Organized_____ Number of members_____

Area served by applicant_____

Name of Officers:

President_____

1st Vice President_____

2nd Vice President_____

Secretary_____

Treasurer_____

Brief description of applicant's program of activities:_____

Applicant hereby subscribes to the constitution and by-laws of the American Forage and Grassland Council and upon the payment of annual dues, as provided in the by-laws of the American Forage and Grassland Council as now in effect or as hereafter may be amended, shall be entitled to all rights and privileges as provided under the by-laws of the Council.

Signed_____

Office_____

A copy of the constitution and by-laws of the applicant should be included with this application along with a membership brochure or application.

STATE OR PROVINCIAL FORAGE COUNCIL LEADERS
YEAR _____

President _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Vice President _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Secretary _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Treasurer _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Who is to be your designated liaison person(s) to AFGC?

Designee _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Designee _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____

Designee _____
Address _____
Phone _____ Email _____