



AMERICAN FORAGE AND GRASSLAND COUNCIL AFFILIATE COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT FORM

Each year Affiliate Councils are asked to submit a report highlighting activities, events and accomplishments over the year. The reports are reviewed and the council who stands out the most will receive a \$500 check from AFGC.

Affiliate: Illinois Forage and Grassland Council

Date: 12/13/2018 **Submitted by:** Jessica Soule

Council Overview:

This section can include the councils mission, vision, objectives, strategies, etc.

The mission of the Illinois Forage and Grassland Council is to provide the framework that unites industry, producers, educational and government institutions for the production, marketing and wise use of forages and grasslands. Each year the IFGC sponsors, co-sponsors or supports a variety of events that help fulfill this mission. In addition, IFGC participates in a number of ag-related events that further this mission.

Objectives of the IFGC are to provide a voice for forage-based agriculture, while improving the economic and social well-being of Illinois' citizens through the promotion and expansion of forages and their efficient utilization.

Additional objectives of the IFGC:

- Provide leadership to Illinois' forage and agricultural industries.
- Promote forages and sustainable grazing practices as a means for more efficient land use and the protection of natural resources.
- Help agricultural producers increase farm profits through the use of forages and grassland for the efficient production of feed, food and fiber.
- Assist and promote research in forage production, utilization and marketing.
- Conducts research tours, extension programs and other educational events to educate producers, service providers and consumers on new developments in forage production.
- Encourage outstanding achievements in the forage and grazing industry through recognition and awards programs.
- Disseminate forage and grazing information through conferences, newsletters and other publications.
- Cooperate with other state and national organizations to promote the forage industry.

Events:

This section should highlight events the council has conducted over the past year including attendance and support.

The **Illinois Forage Institute** is an annual program sponsored by the IFGC Council, and was held March 14, 2018 at Rend Lake College in Ina, IL. The institute had 55 attendees. Dean Oswald, the Forage & grazing Specialist at Midwest Grass and Forage, talked on Cover Crop Species for Forage and Nutrition Sources. Byron Kirwan, USDA/NRCS State Economist, spoke about Hay-land (Forage) Economics and Hay Calculator Use. Dr. Chris Teutsch from the University of Kentucky Research & Education Center spoke twice, first covering Soil Fertility & Grazing Management as a Part of an Integrated Weed Control Program, and later on Sorghum Species: Where do they fit in a Forage System? Travis Meteer, Beef Extension Educator for University of IL Extension, then talked on Mitigating Challenges of Grazing Lush Forages. Lastly, Doug Gucker of University of IL Extension covered Pasture, Rangeland, Forage (PRF) Insurance, followed by Roger Staff, USDA/NRCS Grazing Specialist, who spoke on What Forage Species to Plant & Methods for Your Livestock. Additionally, attendees had the opportunity to visit with numerous exhibitors from relevant businesses including seed, feed, and livestock equipment.

The **Illinois Forage Expo** is also an annual program sponsored by the IFGC Council. This year it was held on June 27, 2018 at Perry & Kathy Hottes Angus Farm in Waltonville, IL, and had approximately 125 in attendance. The program included several educational presentations and industry exhibits representing the seed, feed, livestock equipment, livestock facility, and hay equipment businesses. The educational presentations included a talk from Stacie Songer, Pasture & Land Manager at DowDuPont, who covered Control of Unwanted Vegetation in Pastures. Roger Staff, USDA/NRCS Grazing Specialist, spoke on Eradication of Endophyte Infected KY 31 Tall Fescue by the Spray Smother Spray Method. In addition, Frank Ireland, Research Specialist in Animal Sciences at the University of IL, talked about Cattle Performance While Grazing Toxic Endophyte-Infected Tall Fescue or Novel Endophyte-Infected Tall Fescue. Following the presentations, the focus moved to equipment demonstrations of mowing, raking, tedding, baling, and wrapping. There was also a quality hay & haylage contest which encourages producers to get their forage tested. For the quality hay contest, the classes of forage analyzed are alfalfa, grass, alfalfa / grass mix, and other. The IFGC then works with Agri-King to conduct the forage samples. Additionally, there was a pasture walk and farm tour held in the afternoon, highlighting the Hottes' winter feeding station and managed grazing program. IFGC worked with the University of Illinois to utilize a Drone to capture video footage of the forage demonstrations and overall event. The video will be used at conferences and workshops to promote IFGC events.

Forage Community Involvement:

This section can include any partnerships with other forage industry groups for events, education, etc.

The Illinois Beef Expo was held February 21-25, 2018 at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield, IL. The IFGC has a booth each year at this premier event which brings in approximately 3000 producers from throughout the state. IFGC also offers a complementary 1-year membership drawn daily.

The Northwest Illinois Grazing Conference co-sponsored with the Northwest Illinois Forage and Grassland Council, was held on March 7th, 2018 in Stockton, IL. Presenters included Iowa State University Extension Beef Field Specialist Denise Schwab; U of I Extension Energy and Environmental Stewardship Educator Jay Solomon; Natural Resources Conservation Service Grasslands Specialist

Matt Bunger; and University of Illinois Extension Commercial Agriculture Educators Philip Alberti, Russel Higgins and Teresa Steckler.

The IFGC co-sponsored The Pasture Project's three pasture walks in Illinois with Dr. Allen Williams, "Principle & Practices of Adaptive Grazing." The pasture walks were held on Sept. 24th in Creal Springs, Sept. 25th in Mulberry Grove, and Sept. 27th, 2018 in Arrowsmith. The pasture walks focused on using adaptive livestock grazing principles and practices to improve soil health, productivity and financial gain. There were 85 attendees in all for the three pasture walks.

Awards:

The 2018 IFGC Outstanding Educator Award was presented to Robert Bellm. Mr. Bellm, Extension Crop Systems Educator, retired from the University of Illinois Extension after 28-years serving the crop and forage producers in Illinois. Robert worked closely with the Illinois Valley Hay & Forage Council while in LaSalle County. He earned his M.S. Degree in agronomy, conducting research comparing the efficacy of oat companion crops and post emergence herbicides to control weeds during alfalfa establishment. Robert spent the balance of his career conducting Extension research and outreach programs serving both row crop and forage producers. Along with a dedicated team of other Extension educators, he helped develop and deliver a Management Intensive Grazing program throughout the state, which received both state and national recognition.

The 2018 IFGC Outstanding Producer Award was presented to the Macomber Farm, a 450-acre dairy, forage and grain operation in Stephenson County. The farm grows 110 acres of alfalfa that is cut four times per season. Most of the alfalfa is seeded on hillsides on contour strips to minimize soil erosion. Additionally, David Macomber has been actively involved in the community, and has been a long-time member of the Northwestern Illinois Forage and Grassland Council (and consequently IFGC and AFGC).

The IFGC Outstanding Industry Award will be presented in 2019 to a company or individual representative of a company that has demonstrated outstanding commitment, interest, support and assistance to the Illinois forage industry.

The IFGC sponsors scholarships for students enrolled at the University of Illinois, in the Department of Crop Sciences who have demonstrated interest in forages and grasslands. The scholarship is in honor of Emeritus Professor Darrell A. Miller, a 29 year faculty member and Teaching Coordinator for the Department of Agronomy and the Department of Crop Sciences. In 2018, the award winner of the \$500 scholarship was Aya Bridgeland, a Crop Science major with a concentration in Plant Biotechnology and Molecular Biology. She will be graduating in May, 2019 and she plans to attend graduate school to pursue a PhD in plant genetics. She recently interned for Corteva Agriscience in Indianapolis, IN, and is now employed by the National Soybean Research Laboratory as an undergraduate research assistant.

Research:

The IFGC provided a \$600 grant to Dr. Talon Becker, Commercial Agriculture Educator for the University of Illinois Extension, to help fund forage production research. The goal of the research project is to explore possibilities surrounding intensive forage production systems in southern IL. The project is investigating the forage production potential and nutritional value of spring planted forages (oats, oat/pea mix, and oat/alfalfa mix) followed by summer annuals (pearl millet and sorghum/sudan) after a single harvest on the spring-planted forages. Specific objectives of the project are to estimate

forage production (tons/A) for spring and summer annual forages planted in succession, obtain nutrient analysis on forage crop or crop mixes, and investigate agronomic techniques for forage production in a no-till system. Data from this study will be curated on the IFGC website so that it can be accessed by members as well as the general public. The data will hopefully provide some baseline estimates from which forage producers can make decisions on forage choice for their own operation.

Other Key Partners of the IFGC:

- University of Illinois Extension
- USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Jefferson County Soil & Water Conservation District
- Rend Lake College

Member Communications:

This section should highlight forms of communication done by the affiliate with members. Such as newsletters, email blasts, social media, etc.

The IFGC hosts a website, www.illinoisforage.org. The site is managed by Emily Hartman. It presents the IFGC in a favorable light with members and guests. The website allows IFGC to promote upcoming events as well as to present important information concerning forage topics.

IFGC has an active Facebook presence under “Illinois Forage and Grassland Council,” where members and the general public can see upcoming events and all other relevant updates from the Council.

IFGC publishes a quarterly newsletter, “Forage Feed,” which includes announcements of upcoming forage and grazing events. The newsletter goes to all IFGC members. Copies are handed out at events like the Illinois Beef Expo, Illinois Forage Institute and Illinois Forage Expo.

Members also receive e-newsletters and updates from the Illinois Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (IL-GLCI) regarding upcoming forage-related events in Illinois and surrounding states.

Youth Engagement:

This section should highlight youth engagement initiatives including lessons learned and successes.

IFGC offers a discounted membership at \$5.00, as well as free attendance to the IFGC Forage Institute for all youth. This incentivizes participation of youth in IFGC programs and events, and encourages youth to take an interest in the forage industry. In 2018, we had several youth attendees to IFGC events, and one active youth membership under the North West IFGC affiliate.

Membership:

This section should provide the number of members from the previous year and the current membership numbers for this year.

113 Members in 2017.

115 Members in 2018.

Additional Information:

This section should include any additional information you want to provide.

Northwestern Illinois Forage and Grassland Council (NWIFGC) Report for 2018: The Northwest Illinois Forage and Grassland Council is a very active affiliate of the IFGC.

As shown on the membership application, the NWIFGC consists of producers, agribusiness, educators/agency personnel, and youth dedicated to promoting forages as a viable crop while conserving soil and giving a comparable or greater return than row crops per acre.

In 2018, the Northwestern Illinois Forage and Grassland Council had 56 adult members and 1 youth member (youth category is 12 to 18 years of age). Membership represents 7 Illinois counties and 1 county in Wisconsin. The membership year runs from January 1 to December 31. Our membership drive for 2019 is just starting. In 2017, we had 55 adults and 1 youth.

A 7-member board guides the council and it met six times in 2018. Meeting site is Highland Community College, Freeport. Board members serve a two-year staggered term.

Activities of the NWIFGC during 2018 consisted of the following:

- **Sponsor a hay and straw auction** at Orangeville on the second and fourth Saturday mornings from November through April. Members are charged a 6% commission, non-members are charged 7%. There is no consignment fee for sellers. Consignees are strongly encouraged to provide an analysis and a scale ticket on hay lots. A skid-steer loader is available for reloading.
- A **winter tour** was held January 17 to Brodhead and Monroe, WI. We toured Kuhn North America, Precision Drive and Control, and Minhas Craft Brewery. A coach bus provided the transportation for the approximately 40 people that attended.
- Council members and many of their spouses **staffed the Beef Corral food stand** at the Stephenson County Fair on June 27 from 10 am to 4:30 pm. The council received \$450 from the Stephenson County Beef Association for this effort.
- The council provided **awards for the top 4-H forage (hay, haylage, silage) exhibit** at the following county 4-H fairs: JoDaviess, Stephenson, Winnebago, and Green County, WI.

Other News: The Illinois Ag Legislative Day was held April 13, 2018 at the Illinois State Capital. Past President Don Brown and Director David Ernst represented the IFGC at this event. It provides an opportunity for representatives from farm and agricultural commodity organizations and other diverse agriculture interest groups to meet with state senators and representatives. In addition to creating an Ag Day at the Capitol, participants have an opportunity to become better acquainted and to establish networking relationships to impact issues that affect Illinois agriculture. A working

breakfast is served for the sponsoring organizations and state legislators. The Illinois Farm Bureau hosts a briefing on the Round Table Discussions that were held earlier in the year. This briefing covers the various issues that were determined to be priorities for the current legislative session.

Promotional Items: The IFGC had pens and styluses purchased that boast the IFGC logo. The IFGC hands them out at events to serve as promotional materials, to garner support and membership for the IFGC. Additionally, the IFGC has available for purchase, grazing sticks and PEAQ sticks. These sticks are also provided, 1 time only, to new paid membership to IFGC. IFGC has sold many Grazing sticks to individuals in surrounding states. IFGC is currently ready to place another order to fulfil the needs of producers.