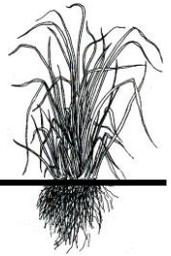




PENNSYLVANIA
FORAGE and GRASSLAND
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<http://www.afgc.org/pennsylvania.php>

American Forage and
Grassland Council
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PENNSYLVANIA FORAGE and GRASSLAND NEWS

Volume 27, No. 1, Winter 2017

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
Barenbrug, USA
Delmhorst Inst.Co.
Ernst Conservation Seeds
Fulton Bank-AG
Lancaster Farming
Northampton County Seeds
Seedway, Inc.
W-L Research

Ampac Seed Co.
Chemgo Seeds
Dow AgroSciences
Farmshine Publications
Kings Agriseeds
New Holland N.A. Inc.
Rohrer Seeds
Timac, USA. Inc.

Forage Variety Trials Report Available

The 2016 Penn State "Forage Variety Trials Report" is available, at your county extension office. It can also be downloaded from the web at:

<http://extension.psu.edu/plants/crops/forages/species/forage-variety/reports/2016-forage-trials-report>

2017 Forage Conference

Mark your calendar! The 2017 Forage Conference will be held on Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at the Grantville Holiday Inn. Registration will begin at 8:45 am. Visit with industry professionals and farmers and enjoy the day listening and learning about educational topics pertaining to forage production from industry leaders!

Topics on the program for the 2017 Conference include:

- **Understanding GMO's** - Dr. Troy Ott, Penn State
- **Alternative Forages** - Tom Kilcer, Advanced Ag Systems, Kinderhook, NY

- **Hay Marketing Producer Panel** - David Fink, Heidel Hollow Farm; Donna Foulk, Penn State Extension
- **Weed Control in Forages** - Dwight Lingenfelter, Penn State Extension
- **Weather Trends and Patterns** - Bill Kirk, Weather Trends International, Bethlehem, PA
- Pennsylvania Forage & Grassland Council Meeting and Presentation of Awards

Attendees will also have the opportunity to visit with industry representatives and commercial exhibits, enjoy good food and fellowship! Pesticide applicator and CCA credits will be available.

Early-bird registration before February 8 will be \$45. After February 8 or at the door will be \$70. Registration form can be found at: http://www.afgc.org/docs/PFGC_Conference_Information_2017.pdf

If you have questions regarding registration, commercial sponsorship, or exhibit space, please contact Terri Breon at: 814-355-1912 or tgbreon@comcast.net. For additional information regarding the content of the program, please contact Jessica Williamson at: 814-865-9552 or jaw67@psu.edu.

The conference is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council in cooperation with Penn State Extension.

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Like Pennsylvania Forage and

Grassland Council to keep up with updates and important links! Don't forget to click the thumbs up button before you leave the page!



Frost Seeding for Pasture Renovation

As we move through winter and into springtime, one of the first tasks on the list for farms with pastures should be to evaluate their condition. If stands are thin, consider frost seeding as an option to thicken your pasture.

Before we begin to talk about seeding, it is important to note that frost seeding (or overseeding of pastures in general) is not a substitute for poor fertility of pastures. Proper pH and fertility are essential for desirable production of pastures. Soil tests should be taken regularly (at least every 3 years), and corrective measures taken.

Although using some type of tillage to renovate pasture has a higher rate of success, using frost seeding is a less expensive option that can be effective if done at the right time and managed properly. Make sure that you can achieve maximum seed-to-soil contact. Often times, a pasture that has been very aggressively grazed into the fall will present a good opportunity for frost seeding. Using a chain drag or running over the field lightly with a disk can open up the stand as well.

Frost seeding works as the ground “honey combs” during this time of year. As temperatures moderate to above freezing during the day, but drop below freezing at night, the seeds have an opportunity to work down into the soil surface. The trampling effect of livestock densities can also be effective to obtain seed to soil contact. Early morning frost seeding, before the soil surface begins to thaw, is recommended. If the soil surface is “slimy”, wait to seed until you get another morning when the soil has frozen again.

Most often, we recommend using frost seeding to introduce forage legumes into an established stand. Legumes have a much better success rate than grasses. Red clover is usually the species most recommended for frost seeding, because of factors including seedling vigor and wide tolerance to pH, fertility, drainage, and drought. Obtaining a desirable stand of grass species from frost seeding is much more difficult. Research at the University of Wisconsin (West and Undersander, 1997) showed that perennial ryegrass and orchardgrass exhibited the best establishment success.

If you plan to attempt frost seeding of a grass, be aware that you will need to make a separate pass with your seeder, as grasses will not spread as far as legumes.

Frost seeding can be done with any type of a broadcast seeder. This can be done by hand, tractor 3-point hitch, or ATV.

Dwane Miller, Penn State Extension

The Dog Days of Winter Hay Feeding

With the holidays in the rearview mirror, the last vestige of a distraction to the routine of feeding cows during winter has come and gone. Now it's snow, ice, sleet, rain, mud, cold, and wind . . . for some, all; for others, a select few.

Through these dog days of winter, the cold seems colder and the wet seems wetter. Worse yet, fixing a frozen waterer while wearing gloves is impossible.

It's sometimes easy to overlook what's really going on with the cows and their feed when icicles dangle from your ear lobes or mud relentlessly reaches from the depths to grab the boots off your feet. Winter chores are a survival game, but don't lose sight of what's going on during the hay-feeding ritual.

Waste not, want not

Though some feeding systems such as bale grazing are inherently going to result in more waste, if your end game is to make the most efficient use of stored hay reserves as possible, how hay is fed makes a big difference.

“Large bale feeding systems are designed to minimize labor but not waste,” says Steve Tonn, extension educator for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln based in Blair.

In a recent edition of UNL's *BeefWatch*, Tonn cites research from Nebraska and Michigan State that demonstrates the impact of hay-feeder type on the amount of feed loss. As with other studies, the tapered cone feeder often results in the least amount of hay waste (less than 5 percent). The next best option is a ring feeder with a bottom skirt.

Tonn suggests that long, rectangular feeders are less effective at reducing hay waste compared to round or square feeders because boss animals can more easily push others away from the feeder.

Bale density also makes a difference. Research at the University of Arkansas showed hay loss was four to five times less in a tapered cone feeder when dense alfalfa-grass hay was fed compared to some less dense oat hay. In this comparison, feed quality may also have been a contributing factor to greater feed loss for the oat hay; livestock will eat more and waste less of high-quality hay compared to low-quality hay, regardless of feeding method.

Feeding baleage also generally results in less waste than feeding dry hay.

Feeding frequency also impacts feed loss. During these dog days of winter, it might be tempting to put out enough hay for multiple days.

“Daily feeding will force cattle to eat hay they might otherwise refuse, overconsume, trample, and waste,” Tonn says. “Cattle waste less hay when the amount fed is limited to what is needed each day. Twenty-five percent more hay is needed when a four-day supply is fed with free access,” he adds.

Frozen twine

One of the tasks associated with bale feeding is the removal of the bale-binding material, be it net wrap, plastic twine, or sisal twine. But what if you don't get it all and the cattle consume it?

During winter, the binding type of choice often freezes to the bale, making removal a more difficult task . . . especially when your eyelids are frozen to your pupils.

In a study conducted at North Dakota State University, where plenty of expertise exists on anything frozen, researchers examined the digestibility of three types of net wrap, biodegradable twine, and sisal twine.

Using Holstein steers, they cut the binding materials into 2-millimeter lengths, placed them in Dacron bags, and put them in an animal's rumen for 14 days. Seventy percent of the sisal twine was digested within the two-week period, but virtually none of the net wrap or biodegradable twine had disappeared based on measured weight in and weight out.

The lesson gained from the research is that the removal of all binding material is the safe play, regardless of weather. Net wrap and twine have been known to build up in the rumen over time and cause digestive issues. Though net wrap has been shown to be superior from a bale storage perspective compared to twine, it also must be removed before feeding or grinding.

Test and monitor

Unknown forage quality yields unknown livestock performance.

"Testing forages lets you determine their best and most economical use in the ration," Tonn says. Working from an accurate forage test, hay can be matched to livestock needs based on the type of animals being fed. It also enables for the most efficient purchase and use of supplements.

Body condition is more difficult to maintain in winter because additional nutrients are directed toward animal maintenance. Winter hay feeding becomes an exercise in matching livestock to hay quality and closely monitoring performance and body condition, even if from the front seat of the pickup while your body parts thaw.

Mike Rankin, Hay & Forage Grower

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Wednesday, February 22, 2017**

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First-ever Alfalfa Checkoff kicks off January 2017

In January, the National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance (NAFA) is kicking off the first-ever Alfalfa Checkoff – U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative. The new checkoff is a farmer-funded investment in alfalfa-related research to help drive innovation and profitability in the alfalfa industry.

NAFA is asking alfalfa farmers and industry representatives to weigh in on research topics they feel are a priority for the industry. To do so, you are encouraged to visit NAFA's website and provide your input. The survey results will be utilized in establishing research priorities for the first call for proposals, which will be announced later this spring.

The NAFA board of directors voted unanimously to begin the national checkoff program to facilitate a farmer-funded program to advance industry research. The U.S. Alfalfa Farmer Research Initiative, implemented voluntarily by seed brands, will be assessed at the rate of \$1 per bag of alfalfa seed.

"This is the first farmer-funded checkoff program the alfalfa industry has ever created," said Beth Nelson, NAFA president. "The unique thing about this program is that 100 percent of the funds raised will be used to support public research into alfalfa and alfalfa forage systems, and it will be driven by the alfalfa industry, primarily farmers."

Seed marketers who have committed to facilitating the checkoff and helping farmers invest in the future of the alfalfa industry include:

Alforex Seeds
Gold Country Seed
ProHarvest Seeds
America's Alfalfa
Hubner Seed
Rea Hybrids
Browning Seed
Jung Seed Genetics
S&W Seed Company
Channel
Kruger Seeds
Simplot Grower Solutions
CROPLAN
Latham Hi-Tech Seeds
Specialty
DEKALB
Legacy Seeds
Stewart
Dyna-Gro
Lewis Hybrids
Stone Seed
Fontanelle Hybrids
NEXGROW
W-L Research
Forage First
Prairie Creek Seed

—From National Alfalfa & Forage Alliance news release



**Pennsylvania
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Grassland
Council**

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Upcoming Events in your Area!

- **Pennsylvania Forage Conference**
Grantville Holiday Inn
Wednesday, Feb. 22
Registration: Terri Breon (814)355-1912
- **Penn State Extension Hay Workshops**
Registration: 610-489-4315
 - Thursday, Feb. 9
Perry County
New Bloomfield, Pa
 - Thursday, March 16
Armstrong County
Kittanning, Pa
 - Thursday, March 30
Potter County
Coudersport, Pa

Check out our new website!

Visit <http://www.afgc.org/pennsylvania.php> to stay up-to-date with PFGC events and news!

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
Exec. Vice-Pres.	Jessica Williamson	(814) 865-9552
Secretary/Treasurer	Terri Breon	(814) 355-1912

Board of Directors

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