



Receiving one of 10 Merit Certificates at the AFGC's banquet and award ceremony was Richard C. Hann (left) of Milton Hershey School Farm.

PFGC Conference

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Also receiving the Merit Certificate was Pennsylvania native, Dr. Lester R. Vough, of the University of Maryland's Agronomy Department. After growing up on a Somerset County dairy farm, Dr. Vough graduated from Penn State's Agronomy Department in 1966, and went on to attend the University of Minnesota and Purdue University to complete his graduate studies. Following work at Oregon State University, he joined the University of Maryland faculty in 1978 and was instrumental in the formation of the Maryland-Delaware Forage Council in 1983.

The AFGC's highest honor, the Medallion Award, went to Dr. Arland Pauli of Deere & Co., Moline, Ill. A distinguished contributor in the fields of research, agronomic service and administration, Dr. Pauli played a major role in the development of the Max-Emerge planter, North America's leading row crop planter. Dr. Pauli is recognized worldwide for his agronomic expertise.

During award ceremonies at Monday evening's Pa. Forage and Grassland Council banquet, seven past winners of the state alfalfa growing program received the Council's Outstanding Grassland Award for consistency in top quality forage production.

"These are farmers who, year-in and year-out, show us what an outstanding job can be done with forage crops," said PFGC past-president John Rodgers. This year's winners were:

- J. Allen Baker, Bedford County, winner of the alfalfa program for 1982 and '84, posting 10-ton yields for both years.

- Donald and Harold Bollinger, Lebanon County, who placed in the top three for two out of the past three years.

- Herman Espy, Huntingdon County, a 1981 winner with an over-10-ton yield.

- Donald Hoffer, Lebanon County, the 1983 Lebanon County alfalfa champion with a yield exceeding nine tons.



The PFGC's Outstanding Grassland Farmers are (left) J. Allen Baker; Donald L. Bollinger, (representing himself and father Harold Bollinger); Howard J. Mellott; Richard Hann (representing Milton Hershey School Farm); and Donald Hoffer.

placed among the program's top three producers for two years.

For outstanding contributions in the field of farm management, four Farm Management Certificates were awarded. The recipients were Neil Carstensen, director of the Mercersburg Academy Farm; Alfred S. Dugan, director of research at Milton Hershey School Farm; Larry Hepner, director of the Delaware Valley College Farm; and Lynn Hoffman, superintendent of Penn State's Agronomy Research Farm.

Installed as Lifetime Members were Newton J. Bair, past Lebanon County Extension agent; Kenneth G. Beachley, president of Beachley-Hardy; John Z. Shearer, Franklin County agent; and John Baylor.

Receiving Honorary Member Awards in recognition of longstanding support of the Pa.

forage industry were Dieter Krieg, editor of "Farmshine" newspaper; William K. Griffith, eastern director of the Phosphate and Potash Institute; Robert H. Williams, retired editor of "Pennsylvania Farmer" magazine; and Samuel H. Smith, Dean of Penn State's College of Agriculture.

- Howard Mellott, Franklin County, the alfalfa program's first champion, when the program was established in 1976.

- Milton Hershey School Farms, Dauphin County, represented by director Richard C. Hann, who



Special PFGC Farm Management Certificates were presented to (left) Larry Hepner, director of Del. Valley College Farm; Alfred Dugan, director of research, Milton Hershey School Farm; Neil Carstensen, director of Mercersburg Academy Farm; and Lynn Hoffman, superintendent of Penn State's Agronomy Research Farm.



The University of Maryland's Dr. Lester R. Vough received an AFGC Merit Certificate from Robert Buker.

AFGC leader foresees greener pastures

BY JACK HUBLEY

Forage crops are coming of age. That was the message conveyed by the American Forage and Grassland Council's president-elect, Walter F. Wedin, during an interview with "Lancaster Farming" at the joint PFGC-AFGC Conference held at the Hershey Convention Center earlier this week.

The Iowa State University agronomy professor took the reins from outgoing president Robert J. Buker during the closing AFGC luncheon on Wednesday.

A 25-year veteran of the AFGC, Wedin feels that forage crops have traditionally ranked among the nation's most underdeveloped agricultural resources. But a number of trends in today's agriculture economy are bringing forages to the forefront, says Wedin.

"Agriculture is going through quite a bit of change in the mid-'80's, and one of these changes is a shift in cropping patterns," notes Wedin. "For some time we had an increase in the row crop acreages that led to a shunting out of the alfalfas and perennial sod crops. What I see now is a shift back to looking at these crops."

One factor responsible for an increase in forage crop utilization is a change in ruminant livestock feeding patterns, says the agronomist.



Wedin

"For example, in my state of Iowa, the fed beef and beef cow numbers are declining, yet there is just as much pasture and forage cropping as there ever was."

Wedin feels that farmer's recognition of alfalfa as a ready source of nitrogen will continue to increase its popularity. "Following one or two years of alfalfa, that first year of corn would need no additional nitrogen supply," says Wedin, "so there would be a savings of 150 pounds of nitrogen per acre, which translates to a per-acre savings of \$25 to \$30."

Recognition of alfalfa's feeding value and nitrogen

contribution has elevated the legume to cash crop status, which in turn, has led to an increased emphasis on market development for legumes, says the agronomist.

And with the an increasing need for soil conservation, grasses and legumes are being recognized for their ability to keep topsoil on the farm.

But the value of legumes doesn't stop with their nutritional, nitrogen-fixing and soil conservation benefits.

"As you grow a corn crop continuously, there is a resistance built up to insecticides and herbicides," Wedin points out, "and you break that cycle when you put a legume in your rotation."

Though the farming community has long been aware of many of the above virtues, Wedin feels that recent research developments have helped to thrust forage crops into the limelight.

"I'm pleased to see that research on conditioning agents is speeding the drying of hay," he points out, "and we now have grasses with higher palatability and digestibility. In the South they now have some fescue varieties that are endophyte-free, and freeing the seed from fungus leads to better gains for cattle."

But even though the benefits of forages will continue to be

well documented, AFGC's new president emphasizes that the challenge to communicate this information to the public has never been greater. And AFGC is determined to meet that challenge head-on.

"During the year ahead we feel that it is important that we increase the visibility of forages and grasslands," says Wedin. "We will have an additional publication coming out during the year which will tell many people much more about forages. Also, a great deal of consideration is being given to the production of a scientific publication."

"We are also planning an educational-type thrust to inform those who formulate public policy. And more specifically, it's likely that we will be expressing our concerns about the proposed demise of the Soil Conservation Service. In the absence of the SCS, where does the small farmer get the technical assistance for such things as terracing and crop rotations?"

Like all of the members of the AFGC and its 21 state affiliates, president Walter Wedin is sold on the benefits of forages, and he plans to communicate that message during the upcoming year.

"If you have to bet on one crop right now, why not make it alfalfa?" Wedin concludes.

