



FORAGING AROUND

'Industry, Farmer, Scientist — Working Together Toward A Sounder Grassland Program'



Beginning Grazier's School Focuses On Grass Selection, Herd Health

ANDY ANDREWS

Lancaster Farming Staff

SYLVAN (Franklin Co.) —

What's good for tall fescue can simply make cows sick, according to a leading grazier.

Burning down and removing the grasses from the rotationally grazed farm operated by the Glenn Moyer family has been "one of the hardest decisions I've made since I've worked with grazing systems in 13 years," he said.

Moyer, host for the Beginning Dairy Graziers School in mid-October at the farm owned by American Farmland Trust (AFT) at the foot of the Tuscarora Mountain near Sylvan, looked over the brown grasses destroyed by Roundup.

Speaking to a group of two dozen producers learning how to graze, Moyer shook his head, realizing that it was awkward to have to get rid of the fescues — hardy grasses that can withstand drought and recover quickly — but he believes they could be responsible for health problems at his dairy.

Fescue endophyte toxicity, and possible nitrate problems resulting

from quick regrowth from rains following a drought emergency, could be responsible for a drop in milk production, respiratory problems, lameness, "fescue foot," and a "lots of symptoms of things," said Moyer.

Fescue can be tolerant of dry weather. At the more than 300-acre AFT farm, the fescues were the first to green up well when rains fell after the drought. The persistent plant has genetics that makes it hardy and vigorous, readily surviving cold winters and prolonged drought.

Fescues, dating back 30 years, can experience a green flush after a drought. But that flush can be accompanied by nitrate toxicity — leading to lots of problems in cows.

"What I found out about fescue is that almost everyone has a theory," said Moyer. But ridding the farm of fescue — which they are doing, gradually — is contrary to "the way I was trained and how I was taught to graze," he said. Replacing it is "uncharted territory."

In October, Bryan T. Petrucci, director of farms division for AFT, introduced the graziers who at-

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The AFT farm uses a concrete feed pad measuring about 100 feet long by 22 feet wide, with an additional area measuring 65 feet by 12 feet, comprising a feed area for 108 cows with two feet of room per cow, Moyer noted. The pad can accommodate about 130 cows. Moyer hosted the Beginning Dairy Graziers School in mid-October at the farm. Photo by Andy Andrews

Cattle, Equipment Can Move Efficiently, Safely With Good Laneway Design



Project Grass Coordinator J.B. Harold, center, and Lou Kopceyk, right, review different types of grasses at the farm of Dale Bracken, left.

INDIANA (Indiana Co.) — If a laneway is designed correctly, herdstock managers can move livestock and equipment quickly, safely, and efficiently, noted several experts who spoke here last year.

Late in the spring, about 70 people, including herd managers, graziers, and agri-industry experts, spoke at a grazing field day and tour of Dale Bracken's stocker cattle farm near Indiana.

The field day, sponsored by Project Grass, the Indiana County Conservation District, and the Mabis Mekenna Foundation, focused on laneway design and maintenance. J.B. Harold, Project Grass coordinator, Allan Wood, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) state engineer, and Bill Stout, Pasture Lab, University Park, spoke about laneway construction

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Pa. Grazing, Forage Conference Set

GRANTVILLE (Dauphin Co.)—The 2000 Pennsylvania Grazing and Forage Conference, March 1-2 here at the Holiday Inn, will feature numerous presentations and discussions focusing on pastures and for-

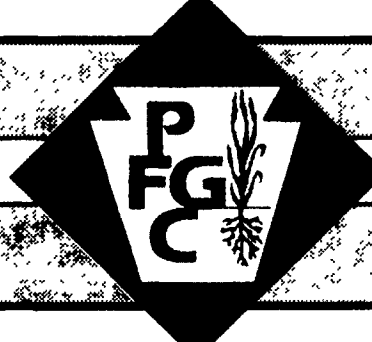
ages.

This conference is co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council and the Pennsylvania Grazing Research and Edu-

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 Pennsylvania Forage & Grassland Council
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♦ **FARM CALENDAR** ♦

Tuesday, February 15
 Crops Day, Limestone Firehall,
 Limestone, 10:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
 Crops Day, Kittanning Township

Fire Hall.
 Wednesday, February 16
 Lebanon County Crops and
 Dairy Day, Lebanon Valley Expo
 Center, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
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