



❖ PASTURE PONDERINGS ❖

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I recently attended the annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Grazing Lands/Forages Conservation Coalition (GL/FCC) in State College.

Also in attendance was an old friend of grazing, Joe Vogel. Joe is a sheep farmer located at Kempton, and is doing a great job with grazing in his program. Joe is involved not only locally with grazing but also at the state level.

As the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau delegate to the board, Joe serves as vice chairman for communications, in charge of publicity and letter writing.

Joe and I were discussing business matters of the GL/FCC and it dawned on us that perhaps not very many people around Pennsylvania were aware of this organization or its functions. I called Joe the other day and interviewed him in order to explain the purposes and functions of the Pennsylvania GL/FCC.

Q: What is the GL/FCC?

Joe: It is an active coalition of producer organizations who have an interest in grazing and forages in Pennsylvania. There is a board of 15 members representing Pennsylvania livestock producer organizations. The GL/FCC is newly formed (one year ago) from the former Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) coordinating committee with expanded membership. The GLCI consisted of producers representing Pennsylvania livestock interests but was not functioning as a true coalition in which the board members were appointed by organizations.

Q: How does the coalition function?

Joe: The coalition, because it is made up of board members from different organizations, unifies the grazing efforts of all the organizations represented. If one of the parent organizations wants to sponsor an educational program on grazing then, because of the coalition, all livestock producer organizations are helping to carry out the program. The GL/FCC is sponsoring and co-sponsoring many different educa-

tional meetings on grazing as a way of promoting the grazing movement in Pennsylvania.

Q: What producer organizations make up the coalition?

Joe: There are 15 different organizations in the coalition. They include Capital Area RC&D, Endless Mountains RC&D, Mid-State RC&D, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts, Pennsylvania Cattleman's Association, Pennsylvania Dairy Association, Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, Pennsylvania State Grange, Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council, Pennsylvania Holstein Association, Pennsylvania Livestock Association, Pennsylvania National Farmers Organization, Pennsylvania Sheep and Wool Growers Association, and Penn Soil RC&D as well as members at large. This is a wide array of producer organizations; however, when they all have grazing as an interest, it provides a common focus for all organizations and makes the coalition much stronger.

Q: Is the membership of the coalition set so only those organizations listed can participate?

Joe: While the bylaws list producer organizations as members, there is nothing that prohibits an organization from being an associate member. As far as that goes, the bylaws could even be changed to include new organizations. There are also member-at-large positions in the

coalition.

Q: How often does the GL/FCC meet?

Joe: We are holding meetings quarterly. Meeting dates are not predetermined, but decided on prior to the adjournment of a meeting.

Q: What types of activities has the GL/FCC been conducting?

Joe: In 1999, we held several field days such as the one that was co-sponsored by the Pennsylvania Cattleman's Association, Penn State Extension, and the coalition at the Haller Farm at Penn State on July 31. We also sponsored a seminar for agricultural lenders where the loan officers could come and learn about the economic benefits of grazing. For 2000, we are planning to hold a similar session for lenders and we are broadening the audience to include agricultural financial planners and creditors. At our last meeting, a committee was appointed to develop a plan of work for 2000 that includes all the field days and seminars that will be sponsored.

Q: How would someone or an organization that was interested in participating contact the GL/FCC?

Joe: The GL/FCC has established an address of Suite 340, One Credit Union Place, Harrisburg, PA 17110-2993. Any correspondence can be directed to this address. In addition to an address, the coalition is looking into getting an e-mail address and eventually a telephone number where they can be reached.

Q: Would the GL/FCC be interested in co-sponsoring a grazing activity that another group was holding?

Joe: Yes we would be interested. If there is a group out there that is interested in working with the coalition, please use the address I just mentioned and let us know what it is that we could help with and someone will contact them.

Well, my thanks to Joe for his

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