

Lancaster Farming SPECIAL

SATURDAY, JULY 15 ISSUE



Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council

FORAGING AROUND



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



2000 PFGC SUMMER NEWSLETTER

Features Quality Haymaking



Want Good Alfalfa? Watch The Soil pH



Producers Use CLA, Mini-Dairies To Move Milk

ANDY ANDREWS
Lancaster Farming Staff
GRANTVILLE (Dauphin Co.) — Milk is the original nutraceutical that can protect the human body, science has proven.

Simply put, milk harbors conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), a fatty acid present in milk that can fight certain types of cancer. Milk contains about 4-6 milligrams of CLA per gram of fat (cheese too).

And pasture scientists are showing that cows fed high amounts of forage including those from pasture can increase CLA in milk by 2 percent, noted Larry Muller, Penn State dairy scientist at last month's Pennsylvania Grazing and Forage Conference at the Holiday Inn in Grantville.

Muller spoke on a session focusing on value added dairy markets.

GAY BROWNLEE
Somerset Co. Correspondent
SOMERSET (Somerset Co.) — When it comes to his alfalfa crop farmer Joe Weimer of Somerset said nothing is more critical than maintaining a pH balance of 6.5 to 7.

The main thing is to keep an eye on the pH, Weimer said.

Weimer usually sends a test to Penn State or to the University of Virginia. On old plantings he runs a soil sample about every third or fourth year. However, with new seedings, it is critical to run a soil sample right away. In two or three weeks the results will come back.

If the indicators show the soil pH is low lime it.

"Usually good alfalfa would take 1,000 pounds to a ton a year

Weimer said "I have a lime spreader so I spread it myself."

Weimer prefers using hydrated lime because it goes to work the same season which is pretty fast. Weimer said the lime application will last 4 to 5 years.

I like to get six to seven years out of seed, Weimer said. When the alfalfa comes out I go into two years of corn before I go back into alfalfa.

The rotation works out well and allows some 12 to 20 acres of new alfalfa seedings to go in every year.

The fundamental thing about alfalfa is to avoid wet spots, cautioned Weimer. Right now, his own acreage has one vulnerable area where a wet spot is troublesome.

(Turn to Page 9)



DUANE E. PYSHER
Grassland Management Specialist
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Harrisburg

I have recently been involved with helping to conduct several grazing schools in the Harrisburg area. As I was conducting some classroom discussions on several agronomic topics, it became evident to me that even though several of the subjects were designed for beginning grazers they were points that many experienced grazers may need to revisit. I will address several of those topics in this column.

When dealing with agronomic principles of grazing we need to think about the basic unit of production — the tiller or individual plant. When we have a population of tillers they are called a sward. It is the number and size of tillers in a sward that makes up the total yield of dry matter, either as hay silage or pasture. We need to make sure that we care for these tillers by providing a proper growing environment with all the essential nutrients such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium. In a soil with the optimum pH level. We also need to provide the tiller with proper management and that basically in

(Turn to Page 11)



PFGC directors, from left, John Pergosky, Ed Rits, Dick Hann, Matt Sanderson, Duane Pysher, Marvin Hall, Craig Williams, Ed Kocula, and Richard Adams. See conference awards story page 12. Photo by Andy Andrews.

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