

# Grass-Based Systems

(Continued from Page A1)

miles), Kelsey said that ag security areas make up only 5,045 square miles. Only 213 square miles, as of May 18, 1999, was preserved in the state through ag easements.

"There's a huge amount of land still not in ag security or easement programs," he said. The reality: it is impossible to purchase development rights for all farmers in Pennsylvania.

The key questions remain: if farming support structures also disappear, including machinery, parts, feed, milk hauler, and other processing industries, "the farmer's not going to survive very well."

Survey participants noted that they depend on support systems in the county. Seventy-four percent purchase their feed in the county, 85 percent purchase their petroleum products, and 61 percent purchase their farm machinery in the county.

From December '89 to December '92, the 10 leading ag-producing counties in the southeast made up the greater percentage of ag easement sales. That changed from after '92 until '98, when the easement purchased became more widely scattered throughout the state.

There's been strong public support for the bond referendum in 1987, which established financing for the statewide easement program. About 70 percent of voters, farm and nonfarm, said "yes" to the program.

During a workshop conducted by Kelsey Wednesday afternoon, participants voiced their concerns. Many agreed that grazing can be useful in showing how economically viable and environmentally friendly grass-based management systems can be to improve public perception about the importance of farming and preserve farming as a way of life.

## Investment And Knowledge

New Zealand grass-based producers are successful because by making an investment in good fencing, "they put in less money toward labor," said Ben Bartlett, DVM, Michigan State University.

Bartlett spoke about tours of seven different countries, including Ontario, Canada; Argentina; Holland; England; Ireland; New Zealand; and western Australia.

Producers who were most successful make the investment in high quality systems and completely understand their feed quality and amount of feed stocks throughout the year.

Producers should know yields as a percentage of dry matter per acre. One farmer, noted Bartlett, "knew this off the top of his head."

Ninety percent of the pasture quality will be "due to your management," he said, "It's a mirror of your management."

Greg Coumo, forage agrono-

mist with the University of Minnesota, spoke about ways to get more energy and durability out of forages. One way is through Kura clover, which is long-lasting in the field.

The key is to obtain the right mix of grass and legumes for "production and persistence," he said.

One study by the university indicated that alfalfa, over the long run, provided more forage than a control planting, and stood up to a grazier mix and a red clover/birdsfoot trefoil test planting.

Keys to success are to manage competition, obtain good seed-to-soil contact, moisture, and correct rotational grazing. Fertilization is critical on low pH soils.

Forage yield was best and harvest was higher when grazing was done only to 6-8 inches residue, and dropped off considerably when grazing too close, to 2-4 inches of residue.

## Awards

Several awards were presented during the evening banquet Wednesday.

They are:

- PFGC Special Award. This was presented to Mike Galbraith, Roaring Spring, district manager of Cargill Animal Nutrition. The award is presented to an individual or company that has made a major contribution to the PFGC.

- Extension/Teaching Award: This was presented to Duane Pysher, pasture resource specialist with the USDA Natural Resources and Conservation District (NRCS).



Tim Kelsey, assistant professor of ag economics at Penn State, standing at left, reviews questions and concerns about ag preservation during a workshop at the grazing and forage conference.



The PFGC Special Award was presented to Mike Galbraith, right, Roaring Spring, district manager of Cargill Animal Nutrition.

- Conservation Farmer Award: Presented to Bob and Kate Boyce, Carlisle. They were honored for their close attention to soil conservation practices while developing a 70-head Angus cow/calf through finishing operation.

- Outstanding Pasture Producer awards were presented to Dean Madigan, Bradford

County Grazing Network; Ed and Sandy Swope, Morotai Farm, Fulton County; and Jeff and Don Byerly, who manage a 60-acre intensive grazing operation in Union County.

Profiles of the award winners were published in *Foraging Around*, a section of *Lancaster Farming*, on Feb. 10.



Ed Koncle, left, welcomes new PFGC president, Duane Pysher, grassland management specialist, NRCS.



Speakers at the Pennsylvania Grazing and Forage Conference Wednesday included, from left, Greg Coumo, forage agronomist, University of Minnesota and Ben Bartlett, DVM, Michigan State University.



Award winners and presenter at the grazing conference. From left, Ed Koncle, outgoing PFGC president; Duane Pysher, PFGC president, with the extension award; Jana Malot, accepting an outstanding pasture producer award for Ed and Sandy Swope, Fulton County; Dave Hartman, accepting for Jeff and Don Byerly, Union County, outstanding pasture producers; and Dean Madigan, Bradford County, outstanding pasture producer.

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