

# Graziers Learn 'Maximum Management' Techniques At Conference

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Lancaster Farming Staff

**QUARRYVILLE (Lancaster Co.)** — Careful management, agreed speakers at the Southeast Pennsylvania Grazing Conference in February, is the key to a successful, profitable grassland operation.

The conference brought together producers and speakers to exchange ideas during the two-day event at the Solanco fairgrounds.

In its eighth year, the conference attracted approximately 200 people for the educational event sponsored by the Lancaster County Graziers.

Each speaker reinforced the theme, "maximizing management," with their own ideas and experiences on effectively managing a grazing operation.

## Cove Mountain Farm

Glen Moyer, Cove Mountain Farm, Mercersburg, Franklin County, chose to try operating a grass-based farm because of financial reasons. Previously farming on a "retrofitted grass farm" for 10 years, in 1996 Moyer took up the challenge to develop seasonal dairy farm from the ground up on a farm willed to American Farmland Trust. Of the farm's 300 acres, 200 are in grass.

Bordered by the Tuscarora Mountains, the farm in southwest Franklin County includes rolling grounds, a variety of soil types, and the sizable Cove Creek.

Moyer himself completed the stall-work, "quite a fun project," on the barn that also has sliding panels for ventilation and sunlight plus translucent panels and a skylight for light purposes. Last year Moyer and his family milked 118 cows.

On the grazing operation, "all the calves are born on the ground, hopefully not in the snow," said Moyer. "The toughest time of calving is when it's wet. The calves must be picked up and taken to a warmer climate within an hour or we basically lose the calf. It's like being dropped into an ice bath — it just sucks the life out of them."

## Not Black And White

Having begun with registered Holsteins, Moyer was introduced to the Jersey breed by a neighbor and over time has added Jerseys to his crossbreeding program. "We're definitely into color. It's not all black and white."

The fencing is single, 16-gauge high-tensile wire on 5/8 inch corner posts and 3/8 inch support posts. Old drums hold water for the paddocks, however "as the herd grows we find we need the 100-gallon tanks," he said.

To make a lane for the cows, he topped an old diversion terrace with loose gravel. Moyer feeds his herd round bales with an unroller.

Cove Mountain Farm weathered a tough lesson and was introduced to its "number one challenge" with an endophyte fescue problem. Irrigating the pasture too late, said Moyer, allowed the fescue to grow while leaving other plants dormant.

The endophyte problem, estimates Moyer, has affected production, body condition, and even reproductive efficiency.

The seasonal setup means that the Moyer family milks from approximately early March to early or middle January.

Additional information on grass-based farming systems and Cove Mountain Farm is available at [Grassfarmer.com](http://Grassfarmer.com).

## The Strite Family

Pastoring a church and raising four homeschooled boys helped to put Harry Strite, Williamsport, Md., on a mission for a lower-stress, less time-intensive way to farm.

After farming with his father since 1972, Strite took over in 1995. A grazing conference inspired the Strite family and helped them to decide to move to an all-grass setup.



**Roman Stoltzfoos, far left, reads audience questions during the afternoon panel discussion for graziers Duane Hertzler, Loysville; Dave Forgey, Logansport, Ind.; Kenneth King, Hutchinson, Kan.; Harry Strite, Williamsport, Md.; and Glen Moyer, Mercersburg. Photo by Michelle Ranck**

"We came home from the grazing conference in 1997 with goals," said Strite. The pace toward moving to a grass-based operation moved even faster than expected, however, and the Strites exceeded the goals set and put all their land in grass in two years and went seasonal in four years.

"We made sure to make new goals,"

he said. "We've made progress but we're not satisfied with where we're at."

At the Strite farm, they do not feed grain and are now feeding stockpiled fescue, also with an unroller, to his cattle housed on the pasture. "And come spring, the manure's all hauled," he said.

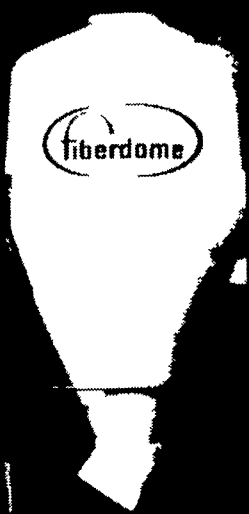
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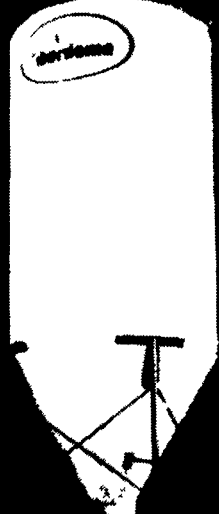
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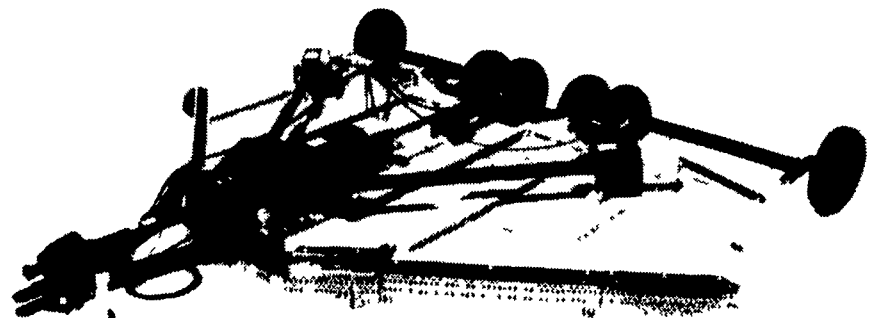


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