



FORAGING AROUND

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



Oregon Native Finds Green Pastures In Pennsylvania



Philip Landis with flock of free-range turkeys he raised on rented pasture near Lititz. The birds use grass more efficiently than chickens do, with nearly 50 percent of their diet provided by the pasture forages, Landis said. *Photo by Dave Lefever*

DAVE LEFEVER
Lancaster Farming Staff

LITITZ (Lancaster Co.) — In the spring of 2000, Philip Landis placed a want ad in the *Lancaster Farming* mailbox markets. He was looking for pasture to rent for starting a grass-based livestock operation in the area.

Raised in the Willamette Valley south of Portland, Oregon, Landis wanted to grow animals as naturally as possible, in a climate that was favorable to pasture growth. Although Oregon is known for abundant rainfall, the precipitation in Landis's home area comes mainly in winter, with summers too dry for good grass production, while late winter and spring are too wet to put livestock on pasture.

"No one makes hay in May in Oregon," Landis said.

Two farmers from the northeast part of Lancaster County responded

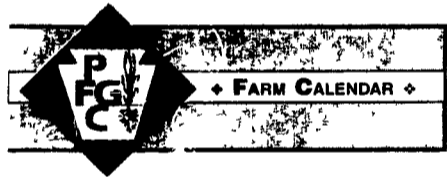
to his ad. Landis agreed to rent a plot of pasture from each and began his business of producing "uncommonly good meat," including turkey, lamb, beef, and chicken raised on pasture. He also offers eggs from pastured hens, veal from whole-milk-fed calves and pork from naturally-fed hogs.

Landis earned a degree in agronomy from Oregon State, a land grant university where "almost no attention was given to direct marketing," he said.

After a stint of rural economic development work in Colorado, Landis turned to livestock production based on sustainable systems.

"I'm more interested in the biology of things," he said. "We try to approach the natural ideal, taking into account the lifestyle of the animal."

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Conference Promises Grazing And Forage Expertise Forage Specialist, 1,200-Cow Dairy Grazer Featured

GRANTVILLE (Dauphin Co.) — The 2002 Pennsylvania Grazing and Forage Conference March 6 and 7 will feature numerous presentations and discussions on grazing and forages.

If you have an interest in learning more about large grazing systems, plant diversity in your pastures, biosecurity on your farm, hay production for horses, dealing with tall fescue in your pastures, or any other grazing and forage topics, you should plan to attend the conference at the Holiday Inn, Grantville.

Among the featured speakers will be Charlie Opitz, a 1,200 cow dairy grazer from Wisconsin, and Ray Smith, an extension forage specialist from Virginia Polytechnical Institute.

Smith has conducted research on breeding and management of both tall fescue and alfalfa. His experience with tall fescue makes him ideally qualified to lead a presentation on "Tall Fescue and Endophyte Issues."

Smith and Glenn Moyer, a seasonal dairy grazer from Franklin

County, will lead the tall fescue discussion, focusing on plant and animal health concerns.

Smith organizes and conducts grazing programs and works closely with extension agents and producers in the field doing grazing research. He is currently conducting research on establishment and maintenance of legumes in a grazing system, as well as organizing and running a grazing school in Virginia.

Opitz will discuss how he and son Mark operate a 3,000-acre grazing system for their 1,200-cow milking herd. Their grazing program started in 1986. The herd is crossbred, including Brown Swiss, American and New Zealand-based Holstein, and Normande genetics.

The Opitz's system includes more than 100 paddocks containing a diverse mix of grasses and legumes developed from intensive

management.

"You have to understand your grasses and how they grow," Opitz said.

"We concentrate on getting the cows high quality grass every 12 hours."

Opitz will discuss their system and its operation on March 6.

On the following day, Opitz and Gary Burely, a 500-cow grazer from New York, will talk about what steps they have taken to maximize their grazing management skills.

Larry Muller of Penn State will wrap up the presentations by addressing the question "Can the U.S. remain competitive in grazing?"

Wednesday evening will offer informal discussions with many of the presenters. Three different discussion groups will be conducted on the topics of dairy grazing, livestock

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- Monday, February 11**
Southeast Pa. Grazing Conference, Quarryville, through Feb. 12.
- Tuesday, February 12**
Forage Expo, Lebanon County Expo Center, 9 a.m.-2.30 p.m.
- Thursday, February 14**
Forage Expo, Lancaster County Farm and Home Center, 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
- Wednesday, February 20**
Mid-Atlantic Direct Marketing Conference and Trade Show, York Expo Center, through Feb. 23.
- Saturday, February 23**
Warm-Season Grasses Meeting, Columbia County Ag Center, also Feb. 28.
- Tuesday, March 5**
Northwest Pa. Grazing Conference, Dubois Ramada Inn, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday March 6**
Pa. Grazing and Forage Conference, Holiday Inn, Grantville, through Thursday, March 7.
- Friday, March 8**
Bradford/Tioga Grazing Conference, Troy Fire Hall, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

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Lancaster Farming

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Crossbred beef cattle roam the pastures of Pond Hollow Farm, Martins Creek. Elwood and Pauline Fox switched to rotational grazing after years of conventional dairy farming and raising dairy heifers. See story page 8.

Photo by Deanna Cunfer, Carbon Co. correspondent