



# FORAGING AROUND

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



## *Grazing, Flexible Management Style Pay Off For Maryland Dairy Family*

**DAVE LEFEVER**  
*Lancaster Farming Staff*

**KNOXVILLE, Md.** — In 1997, Myron and Janet Martin and family renovated their dairy operation in two key ways.

They had a new freestall barn built with a slatted floor and manure pit underneath. They also adopted intensive grazing to complement the total mixed ration (TMR) feeding program that was already in place.

The revamped management approach resulted in a major jump in net income from the 60-cow milking herd while freeing up more family time. And while Myron Martin said he is always in the process of learning more, he is eager to share the reasons for his success so far.

Martin gives a lot of credit to Marshall ryegrass for boosting milk production and increasing the stockpile of forages on this hilly 118-acre farm near the Potomac River.

Marshall ryegrass is a variety of annual ryegrass developed over several decades in Mississippi to be very aggressive in its growth, to maintain winter hardiness, to mature

slowly, and produce a high yield of good quality forage, according to information gathered by Don Schwartz of the Washington County extension. This ryegrass variety, and others, have been used extensively in the south for more than 30 years to improve cool season pasture systems on beef and dairy farms.

On the Martin farm during the spring and fall, a large portion of the feed for the milking cows comes from grazing the annual ryegrass. During periods of good growth, Martin said he is able to cut the TMR in half, while keeping milk production as high, or even higher, than on TMR alone.

This spring, average production per cow swelled to 85 pounds when the herd was grazing the leafy ryegrass pastures, according to Martin.

"When they went out on grass they kept right on producing," he said.

The Martins temporarily switched from milking twice a day to three times a day during this "spring flush."

Another surprising outcome

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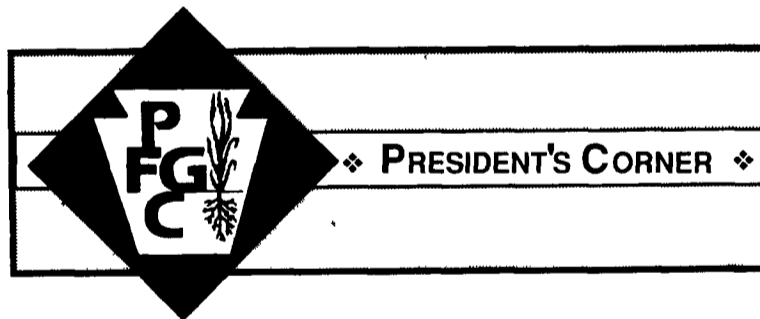


The Martin family of Knoxville, Md., is well-provided by a 60-cow milking herd managed in a combination grazing/total mixed ration approach. From left are Glendolyn, 14; Josiah, 6; Kenton, 6; Kraig, 7; Karissa, 7; Janetta, 12; Myron, Janet, and Yolanda, 16. Photo by Dave Lefever

## Conservationist Visits Grass-Based Dairy



Robin Heard, Pennsylvania conservationist, left, participated in a Project Grass field day in Fulton County on May 8. With Heard, from left, Dave Ruppert, Armstrong Co. Conservation District manager; Suzette Brought, Southcentral Project Grass coordinator; Tom Matticks, assistant state conservationist, Clarion Co.; J.B. Harrold, Western Project Grass coordinator; Kenneth Booth, beef producer; Walt Shiever, dairy/beef producer; and Darryl Emmick, New York state grazing specialist, learn about different water ram pumps available to graziers. See story on page 9.



## *Growing Hay Is Now Against The Law?*

**John Pergosky**  
PFGC President  
Greetings to all.

As the 226th celebration of our nation's birth passes and leaves us with ringing in the ears from local fireworks displays, I find my self moved by a convergence of events that serve as notice to me and perhaps to others that our freedom and individual rights have been under continuous

attack for a very long time. Our founding fathers, many of whom were farmers themselves, were the first to battle this assault and triumphantly formed a great nation, free of the heavy handed rule of King George. That was then. Today we struggle with affronts to our liberty carried out in the name of goodness by foreign

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