

# SPECIAL

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22 ISSUE



Pennsylvania Forage and Grassland Council

# FORAGING AROUND

'Industry, Farmer, Scientist - Working Together Toward a Sounder Grassland Program'



# 2003 PFGC WINTER NEWSLETTER

- Research Reports on How to Overcome Drought.
- Project Grass information.
- Feature on Award-Winning Cattle on Grazing System.
- Preview of Forage Conference in Grantville (March 5-6).
- Calendar Meeting items
- PFGC, AFGC News.



### Virginia Grazer Sold On Bermuda Grass

**GAY BROWNE**  
Virginia Correspondent  
**HARRISONBURG, Va.**—Michael Phillips has something to prove. On July 27 during the Second World Forage Bermuda Grass Field Day, some 145 persons learned what it is.  
"My goal is to average year is to graze your animals and not make hay," Phillips said. "I'm gonna do it."  
The progressive grazer didn't predict when this would happen, although he warned he's been known to "talk the ears off a mule of corn."  
Phillips invited field day participants to walk through the leader Bermuda grass without their shoes and socks. He spins about the benefits of this versatile grass on which

he grazes a variety of livestock, including beef cows. "The cheapest machine you can run has four legs and a fly swatter," he said.  
For every person who is willing to listen and hold their breath for something new there are scores of non-believers when it comes to Bermuda grass moving north from the deep south where it is generally grown.  
"Some say it's too cold here for Bermuda," Phillips said. He reported being laughed at as much that he tried to plant where the neighbors can't see.  
Phillips and his wife Susan operate a rotational grazing system diversified with 30 brood cows, 40 ewes and two



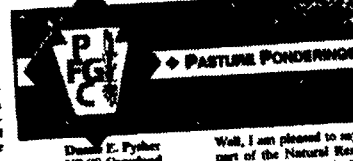
poultry houses that, so far, have survived unscathed in the 2002 avian influenza outbreak.  
By his side, Phillips continues to talk off the fence on his farm in order to plant more Bermuda grass. The preferred name for this is in the fall, just before the first bitter frost hits he said. He then needs winter rye — rather than ryegrass — to planting Bermuda grass "sprigs" the following year.  
"I will not use ryegrass," he said. "It continually wants to come back."  
The Bermuda sprigs can be planted by hand or by machine for larger areas. Phillips uses a machine converted from a combine to plant Bermuda grass "sprigs" the following year.  
Agad and new Bermuda grass is pictured at the World Forage Bermuda Grass Field Day, conducted at the farm of Michael and Susan Phillips, Harrisonburg, Va. The use of Bermuda grass goes deep into the earth to pull up nutrients. Experienced growers of Bermuda can't say enough about its potential to make money for the farmer. The versatile grass is high in digestibility, protein, and summer starts earlier, grows longer, and stays tender this whole year, they claim. According to growers, all breeds of livestock love it, but especially horses.

### Lehigh Hay Exporter Keeps Delivering In Drought Year

**DAVE LEFFRY**  
Lancaster Farming Staff  
**GERMANTOWN, Pa.**—For three decades, David Pink has been a leader in innovative hay marketing.  
Even through drought years like this one, the owners of his business allow him to keep shipping large quantities of high quality hay to home and dairy farms as far away as the Caribbean Islands and Europe. Dry weather has also increased demand for hay on the East Coast.  
Pink first began compressing hay on Hinkel Hollow Farm here in the mid-1970s. Even today, this enterprise is still relatively rare in our region, though every corner in the northeast part of the country.  
Much of the manual labor in Pink's operation has been eliminated over the years, but the principle remains the same: compressed hay is compressed and shipped in packages that can be shipped as efficiently as possible.  
With the help of wife Susan, son Travis and Mike, and a staff that includes about 18 workers during harvesting season, Pink markets 5,000 tons of hay per year. About 75 percent of that is harvested from 900 acres of timothy, alfalfa, orchardgrass and mixed hay stands on the home farm and nearby rented land.  
Aside from making freight vans, the Finks also strive to deliver a top-quality product. Field-dried timothy hay, in fact, ranked three first-place winners in this year's Hay Show at Ag Progress Days.  
"The key to marketing hay is getting the right product at the customer at an affordable price," Pink said. And the cost of transport can "make or break the ability to get into the market," he pointed out.  
The hay processing operation on Fink's farm converts 200-pound square bales (3 x 3 x 8 feet) into compact square bales 22 inches long. Don't expect to grab one of these "table bales," however, and toss it into the hay rack with the one you would a regular small bale. These bales have been packed together with about a million pounds of hydraulic pressure in a compressing

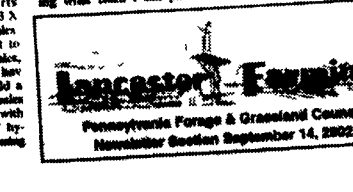
machine. The result is a bale weighing 70-90 pounds depending on the type of hay.  
The Fink's harvest large quantities in a short period of time as close to the peak of production as possible. For timothy, that generally means the pre- to early October stage, between June 10 and 20 alfalfa harvest begins in the third week of May.  
Once the season begins, we just go. Fink and Harvest is continuous through the summer.  
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**Dennis E. Fyher**  
NRCS Grassland Management Specialist  
I had it hard to believe that my grandchildren have gone back to school and summer is drawing to a close. My oldest grandson is playing football this year, so that makes him part of the team. Well, just like my grandson, I see lots of young people as a team. Whether you're a team as a group of people working together in a coordinated effort.  
By now, you may be wondering what team I am part of

Well, I am pleased to say I am part of the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) grazing team.  
What could a grazing team do? Is it a group that is grazing as a team? The grazing team that has been put together by Robin Harrell, Pennsylvania's State Conservationist, has been charged with the job of providing technical assistance to the people of Pennsylvania to plan and install grazing systems. This team is made up of us.  
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