



Dear Henbit & Chickweed,
 The stuff that gets wild garlic
 Gets you, too, they now confirm
 That's just as good as catching
 Three fish with just one worm!
 Outta my wheat, weeds!
 - Fred

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The miracles of science

PFGC Recognizes Forage, Grassland Innovators

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thy, alfalfa, orchardgrass, and mixed stands on the home farm and nearby rented land.

The Finks maximize handling efficiency by double-compressing the hay into super-dense 35- and 80-pound bales which are sold to local farmers and to dairy and horse operations as far away as Europe and the Caribbean Islands.

In accepting the award, Fink credited Dr. John Baylor, PFGC founder and longtime forage specialist at Penn State, for first interesting him in exporting hay three decades ago. Fink began to double-compress hay on Heidel Hollow Farm in the mid-1970s.

Fink quoted Freeman Dyson, a physics professor at Princeton University, to highlight the role hay has played in the development of modern civilization.

Dyson was one of about 100 leading thinkers who several years ago were asked, "What has been the most important invention in the past 2,000 years?" Dyson's answer was hay.

"In the classical world of Greece and Rome and in all earlier times, there was no hay," Dyson said. "Civilization could only exist in warm climates where horses could stay alive through the winter by grazing. Without grass in winter, you could not have horses, and without horses you could not have urban civilization. Sometime during the so-called Dark Ages, some unknown genius invented hay, forests were turned into



Tom Roche of Ireland, left, compares grazing notes with Paul Craig, Dauphin County extension agent.

meadows, hay was reaped and stored, and civilization moved north over the Alps. So hay gave birth to Vienna and Paris and London and Berlin, and later to Moscow and New York."

The quote was cited in a technology column written by Microsoft founder Bill Gates in 1999.

Dr. William Stout, USDA-ARS Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit, State College, received this year's Research/Extension Award. Stout recently passed away. PFGC leaders honored him for his years of commitment to grassland education.

Kathy Soder, USDA-Agricultural Research Service (ARS) pasture systems researcher, ac-

cepted the award on Stout's behalf. Soder had worked closely with Stout over a three-year period, during which he acted as an invaluable mentor for her, Soder said.

Stout was an adviser on the Pennsylvania Project Grass coordinating committee, providing technical advice and expertise over the years. He was instrumental in promoting the Project Grass grazing stick and grazing notebook, tools that help graziers manage their pastures. Stout developed two grazing notebooks, one for dairy producers and one for other livestock species.

Stout had also been active in the expansion of Project Grass across Pennsylvania, and assisted in organizing numerous field

days and the formation of grazing groups.

"Dr. Stout's biggest contribution has been in the area of education," said Dr. Marvin Hall, Penn State agronomy professor and PFGC officer. "Because of these contributions, he is truly deserving of the PFGC Research/Extension/Teaching Award."

James Cropper, USDA-ARS humid regions grassland specialist, received the PFGC conservation award.

Cropper works at the USDA-ARS Pasture Systems and Watershed Management Research Unit at Penn State. He has been involved in conservation work in Pennsylvania and the Northeast since 1987, when he became Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) agronomist in Chester, where he worked at disseminating information to help start grazing programs. Cropper also produced and edited Pasture Prophet, a grazing newsletter that has had national distribution.

Since 1995, Cropper has worked at the Pasture Lab Building in State College. His contributions during that time include developing pasture sections in the USDA/NRCS National Rangeland and Pasture handbook, pastureland ecology training sessions at North Carolina State and Penn State, and the NRCS pasture condition scoring system.

"Jim Cropper's unsurpassed efforts in conservation with forages makes him highly deserving of the PFGC's Conservation Award," Hall said.

The two-day conference featured a number of presentations on grazing and forage topics.

Irish brothers and dairymen Tom and Dr. John Roche shared their views on the potential of grazing opportunities in the Northeast.

"There is huge potential for pasture-based grazing dairy farms in the northeastern U.S.," they concluded. "However, although you can learn from the obvious mistakes that other countries have made, you will not be able to directly transfer their system into your region. Pick the most appropriate management practices and research them within your system."

Tom Roche manages a 100-cow dairy on the Roche family farm in southern Ireland. John works as a dairy nutrition scientist in New Zealand.

Dr. Steve Washburn of North Carolina State University spoke on his research into animal genetics for grazing systems.

Washburn focused on the potential of crossbreeding to improve survivability and reproductive performance in dairy cattle.

"Given our historical decline in dairy cow fertility and limitations of solving the problem through increasing energy intake, it is time to gear the genetic selection of dairy cattle to include fertility indicators along with milk production," Washburn noted.

Read the upcoming April 19 edition of *Foraging Around*, a section of *Lancaster Farming*, for more conference reports.