

## President's Corner

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that the strength of sustained civilization is based on forages. Most of us just take it for granted. Do you take PFGC for granted?

We need your support and participation! Over the decades, PFGC has achieved many successes. Probably the most notable was its Forage Progress Days, started in 1963, which has evolved into Penn State's Ag Progress Days.

Forages continue to be at the center of this wonderful event. The amount of inform-

ation that can be obtained by attending is overwhelming. Exhibits, equipment demos, plots, and tours are just a few of the items to be taken in.

PFGC has had a team approach from its inception in 1960. It takes a partnership between Farmer, Industry, and Education sectors all working together for forage-based agriculture to advance. PFGC is made up of all three sectors and is working together so that forage progress can be made. "Farmers, industry and educators working together for better forage programs"

has been the Council's trademark from the beginning.

What is PFGC doing these days? The following is a partial list:

- *Foraging Around*, this section of the paper, is one effort that I am very pleased to contribute to. By the way, you too can contribute articles to be included.

- A quarterly newsletter.
- Hay Show at Ag Progress Days.

- Co-sponsor of annual Pennsylvania Forage and Grazing Conference in Grantville.

- Annual picnic during Ag Progress Days.

- Sponsor of the Pennsylvania Grassland Evaluation Contest.

- Various awards.

The Grassland Evaluation Contest is the newest activity that we are supporting. This is a contest for youth groups including FFA and 4-H. The participants are challenged in their knowledge of pasture management. The end result will help develop critical skills for the future workforce of agriculture.

We can do more but need your involvement. Your membership in our organization is appreciated, but more importantly your active involvement in our activities is critical for success. If you are not a member, why not join and add your strength to the forage industry.

## Quackgrass Makes Good Forage

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good pasture, especially over traditional bluegrass, noted Heather D. Karsten, assistant professor of agroecology, Department of Crop and Soil Sciences at Penn State.

Karsten was a speaker during the crop management segment of the first Penn State-sponsored Agronomy-Industry Field Day last July.

The field day replaced the traditional seed business weed day normally conducted at the same time at the Penn State Southeast Research and Extension Center in Landisville.

More than two dozen agency and agri-industry personnel were on hand during the segment conducted by Karsten during concurrent sessions at the field day. Karsten focused on managing orchardgrass and mixed species pastures for productivity and high animal intake.

The key to successful grazing forages, according to Karsten, is managing species to provide "erect, upright growth, and to select species with a higher harvest index," she said. "Manage for vegetative, leafy plants."

A species such as quackgrass provides animals with optimum intake, because the grass is drought tolerant with more productivity and more photosynthesis, even during drought. This contrasts with bluegrass, with low drought tolerance and a grass more likely to shut down as moisture levels plummet.

Fresh pasture improves the overall levels of omega-3 (the

good fat) and conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), known to prevent certain types of cancer in humans, which are in grazing livestock. The reason: the leafy parts of a plant provide more unsaturated fats for the animal, which are readily converted to CLA in the rumen.

The objectives for every grazer should be growing a drought-tolerant species with a lot of biomass, with taller, leafy, more highly digestible forage. Forage needs to have more material per bite.

Bluegrass and quackgrass have their carbohydrates, necessary for regrowth, stored in rhizomes below the surface. With good management, the rhizomes help provide the potential for a lot of tillering and potential leafy regrowth.

The plants, however, cannot be grazed down too far, otherwise regrowth can be severely affected. If the stem base is grazed off, regrowth can be in jeopardy.

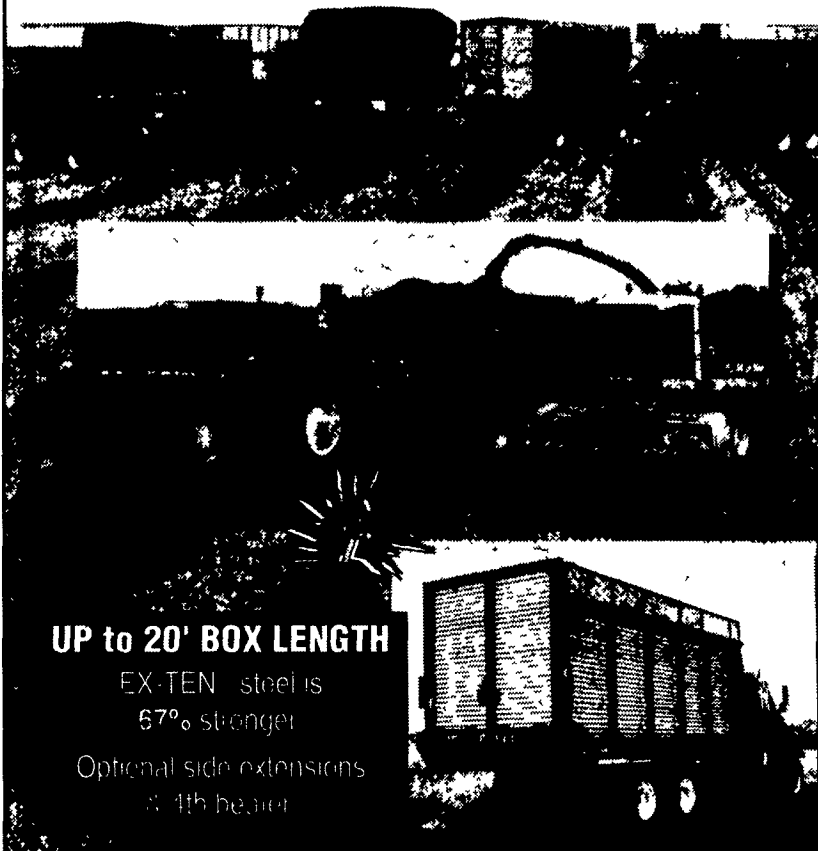
Orchardgrass can be grazed higher and still recover because of its drought tolerance.

Poultry on pasture benefits greatly. One test measured 30 percent more omega-3 fat in pastured poultry than from traditional chicken commercial mash. There is also about 40 percent more vitamin A in pastured hens than in commercial chickens, and twice as much vitamin E. Both vitamins are antioxidants beneficial to humans and livestock.

Caged pastured poultry can follow behind dairy, beef, or sheep grazing and can "add some income," said Karsten, to a grass-fed operation.

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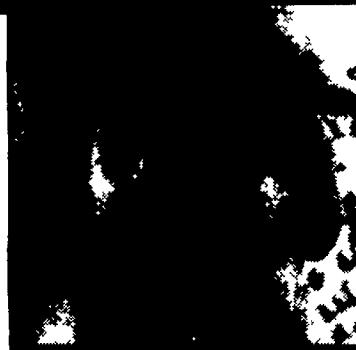
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