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MISSOURI FORAGE & GRASSLAND COUNCIL

Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

Summer 2017

Volume 65 Issue 3

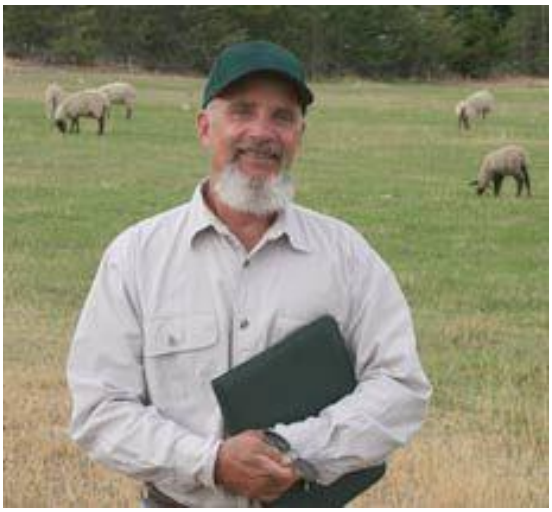
Missouri Forage and Grassland's 2017 Annual Conference

Mark your calendars for the upcoming 2017 MFGC Annual Conference, Monday, November 6th and Tuesday, November 7th at the Capital Plaza Hotel and Conference Center in Jefferson City, MO.

One of the main speakers will be Mr. Ray Archuleta. Mr. Archuleta is a Conservation Agronomist at the NRCS East National Technology Center, in Greensboro, North Carolina. Ray teaches soil health and the principles of agroecology throughout the country. He has 25 years of experience with the Natural Resources Conservation Service working in New Mexico, Missouri, Oregon, and now in North Carolina and has held the following positions: Soil Conservation technician, Soil Conservationist, Nutrient/Irrigation Specialist, Water Quality Project Manager, District Conservationist, and Area Agronomist. He is also a Certified Professional Soil Scientist with Soil Science Society of America. Ray worked for two years in Guatemala as a Livestock Specialist in the Peace Corps. His infectious enthusiasm for soil health has earned him the moniker, Ray the Soils Guy. He has a B.S. in Agricultural Biology.

Mr. Ray Archuleta will speak twice on Monday, November 6th. His first topic will be on Grass and Soil Health and his second topic will be on Grazing Cover Crops.

Dr. Fred Provenza, also a main speaker, began his career working on a ranch near Salida, Colorado, while earning a B.S. degree in Wildlife Biology from Colorado State University. As a research assistant and technician at Utah State University, he earned M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in Range Science and joined USU's faculty in 1982. He has received awards for research, teaching, and mentoring students. In 1994, Provenza received an Outstanding Achievement Award for accomplishments in research from the Society for Range Management. In 1999, he received the W.R. Chapline Research Award, the most prestigious award given by the Society for Range Managements for achievements in research. He was named professor of the year for the College of Natural Resources in 1989 and 2003 and he received two of Utah State University's most prestigious awards, the Outstanding Graduate Mentor Award for work with graduate students in 1999 and the D. Wynne Thorne Career Research Award for achievements in research in 2008.



Dr. Provenza will speak twice on Tuesday, November 7th. His first topic will be "How Palates Link Herbivores with Landscapes". His second topic will be “Mending Broken Links Soil, Plants, Herbivores, and Humans”.

A Producer panel will be held on Tuesday Morning.

Please see the tentative conference schedule on page 17.

Check the MFGC Website, at http:mofgc.org, around the first week of September as conference registration should be available to print off and mail in.

Registration paperwork will also be included in the Fall Newsletter, which should be mailed out around the first week of September.

Request For 2017 Grasslander Award Nominations

The MFGC/GLCI Board of Directors ask for your assistance in nominating individuals that you feel deserve recognition for work done in Missouri Grassland Agriculture. Awards are given to as many as three persons annually at the MFGC/GLCI Annual Conference. Awards are given in three categories: producer, industry and agency.

Candidates shall be active participants in some aspects of Missouri grassland agriculture and candidates shall have made significant contributions to Missouri grassland agriculture.

Nominations can be sent to Cindy Thompson by email Cindy.Thompson@MoFGC.org or send by U.S. mail to: MFGC/GLCI, PO Box 104895, Jefferson City, MO. 65110

Please include the candidates name and how they have fulfilled these qualifications.

Deadline for nominations is September 15th.

The MFGC/GLCI Board has final approval of the award recipients.

18th Annual Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest

Melinda Barch, USDA-NRCS

The 2017 Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest was held June 6th & 7th in Springfield, MO. FFA and 4-H teams from Arkansas, Indiana, Missouri, and West Virginia competed in this competition. Students qualified for this contest by being the best from their state competitions. There were a total of 15 teams, including 7 FFA and 8 4-H teams plus one individual. The students were competing for high scoring team and high scoring individual awards.

Since this is a national contest and teams come from other states a practice contest was set up for them to sharpen their skills. During the practice contest students are able to ask questions to the section leaders for further clarification. This year's practice contest was held on the Sam Baird property. After the practice contest students are encouraged to visit a special site set up for Plant Identification.

After practice, teams are invited back to MDC's Andy Dalton's Shooting Range at Bois D' Arc Conservation Area. Here the students can relax in the shade, have a competitive game of washers or new this year the MDC staff took some of the students fishing. While doing this a coaches meeting is convened to answer any last minute questions prior to the next day's contest.

Contest day weather was perfect, as the students rotated through the 4 sections on 25-minute intervals, Grassland Condition, Soils Interpretation, Plant Identification and Wildlife Habitat. The contest was held on the Sam Baird property.

Teams competing included the following 4-H teams: Indiana - Batesville County, Missouri – Aurora, Lincoln County and Rock Prairie, Arkansas – Randolph County, Madison County, Fulton County and Cleburne County; FFA teams competing included: Arkansas – Pocahontas, Missouri – Ashland, Stockton, Rolla, and Plato, West Virginia – Clay and Ravenswood plus one individual from West Virginia.

When the scoring was complete there were three teams that scored 1000 points or more out of a possible 1200 points. The top 5 high scoring teams in both FFA and 4-H received awards. As well as the top 5 high scoring individuals in both FFA and 4-H.

The 2017 Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest high scoring FFA team was Ashland FFA from Ashland, Missouri with 1123 points.

Ravenswood FFA West Virginia was 2nd with 1096 points, Stockton FFA Missouri was 3rd with 1062 points, Rolla FFA Missouri was 4th with 982 points, and Plato FFA Missouri was 5th with 964 points.

The 2017 Mid-America Grassland Evaluation contest high scoring 4-H team was Lincoln County Missouri with 979 points.

Aurora Missouri was 2nd with 943 points, Fulton County Arkansas was 3rd with 905 points, Cleburne County Arkansas was 4th with 889 points and Rock Prairie Missouri was 5th with 889 points. As you can see the 4th & 5th place teams were tied. According to the contest rules, in case of a tie score the Plant ID score will be used to determine the winner. In this case Cleburne County had a higher Plant ID score than Rock Prairie.

Individual award winners for FFA started out with a tie for first place. The contest rules indicate that in case of a tie score the Plant ID score will be used to determine the winner. In this case the two individuals had a tie Plant ID score. The rules then indicate the Grassland Condition score will be used to determine the winner. In this case the two individuals had a tie Grassland Condition score. The rules then indicate that if still tied a coin-flip will be used to break the tie. These two individuals had identical scores in all four sections. So based on the rules and the coin-flip the 1st place high scoring FFA individual was Justin Belew-Ashland MO FFA with a score of 389 points, 2nd place Teresa Riffle-Ravenswood WV FFA 389 points, 3rd place Cheston Stacy-Stockton MO FFA 388 points, 4th place Katlynne Rollyson-Ravenswood WV FFA 377 points, and 5th place Grace Rathert-Ashland MO FFA 370 points.

Individual award winners for 4-H were: 1st place Ethan Mooneyham-Aurora MO 362 points, 2nd place Kathryn Bechdoldt-Cleburne County AR 352 points, 3rd place Emily

Hudson-Lincoln CO MO 338 points, 4th place Chase Himschoot-Fulton CO AR 325 points and 5th place Kyle Schoer-Lincoln CO MO 322 points.

This year's overall high scoring individual went to Justin Belew-Ashland MO FFA with 389 points.

The overall high scoring team went to Ashland MO FFA with 1123 points. The overall high scoring team and coach received a plaque, medals and a backpack.

Awards were sponsored by Missouri Department of Natural Resources Soil & Water Conservation Program and Missouri Southern Seed Inc. from Rolla, Missouri

Congratulations to all the teams and individuals that competed in this year's contest.

Recipe for Fall Stockpiling Tall Fescue Successfully

Mark Kennedy & John Turner[1]

"Fall Stockpiling" is the practice of managing the late summer and fall plant growth to provide the needed quantity and quality of forage for grazing later in the season—from late fall to spring green up. Stockpiling, more than any other forage management practice, can improve the profitability of a livestock enterprise by substantially reducing the cost of stored feed, primarily hay. Any forage plants can be stockpiled; tall fescue is especially well suited for fall stockpiling in Missouri because:

a. It makes a lot of its growth in the fall.
b. The forage is of outstanding quality, often up to 20 % or more crude protein.
c. Tall fescue resists the elements, cold and moisture, well and retains excellent quality clear up to spring. Crude protein typically declines about 2 % per month.
d. Tall fescue tolerates relatively close grazing of the stockpiled forage; a 2" stubble is enough.
e. Tall fescue sod holds up well to the heavy traffic associated with winter grazing the stockpile, and it tolerates some pugging during muddy times better than most.

Growing the stockpile is the "easy part." For stockpiling to be most profitable it must be fed, or rationed, properly—that is the animals must have their access to the stockpile controlled in such a way that a high percentage of the forage is actually eaten by the animals. You wouldn't give your whole herd access to their winter hay supply all at once; and, likewise, you shouldn't give them access to you entire stockpile—"hay on the stump." Strip grazing, using temporary electric fencing, affords the grazier the means to limit the animals' access to the forage; each individual grazier must decide how often they want to move the fence. Many graziers move the fence every day or every other day; unless you consider your time to be very valuable this is a profitable strategy. At the most animals should be given access to no more than a 3-day supply of feed; the percentage of the forage that is wasted becomes intolerably high if animals are given access to a 4-day supply or more.

Follow these steps for growing and feeding quality tall fescue stockpile:

1. Select pastures or hay fields that are predominantly tall fescue and that have been grazed or clipped leaving a 3 - 6 inches stubble the first week of August. If you start stockpiling prior to the first week of August the yield will not be much greater but the quality can be significantly lower. Delaying the start of stockpiling will give higher quality forage but a lower yield.

2. Apply 40 - 60 pounds per acre of nitrogen between August 1 – August 31. MU recommends 80 lb. N on deep, productive soils if the stand is vigorous and soil moisture is good. Stands with a lot of legumes, mostly red clover, will produce a lot of forage without applying commercial N; a stand that is 40% legume (by weight) will produce as much as a pure stand of fescue with 60-80 lb. of N.

[1]State Grazingland Conservationists, Retired, USDA-NRCS, Missouri

3. Defer grazing until early December if possible or until all other pastures or sources of grazing have been utilized. Delaying grazing until February 1 will usually allow the endophyte toxin level to decline below the toxic level.

4. Try to stockpile 1-1.5 acres per cow; if you are stockpiling for the first time use 1 acre per cow as a starting place. This should provide around a 75-90 day feed supply if rationed properly.

5. Feed stockpile during December and early January. Feed hay (if needed) in January and February when ground is frozen or when you have lots of snow/ice. Finish feeding the remainder of your stockpile from late February through green up in April. This should allow you to avoid hauling and feeding hay in the mud.

Calculations for grazing stockpiled fescue

It is recommended that around December 1 you "measure" your total stockpile and calculate("estimate") the carrying capacity—how many days worth of feed you have for your animals. Walk over the field with a yardstick, measuring the height of the grass at several places; average your measurements. Using the figures and procedure below estimate the total pounds of forage on the field(s) and the total number of days you can feed your herd.

Now let's go through it for a daily (or 2 or 3 day) allocation:

1. **Estimate forage yield** – pounds of total above ground dry matter on a per acre basis. Use a yardstick to measure the height of the grass where you the herd will graze next. Yield estimates vary based on the height and density of the stand. In general one inch of (predominantly fescue) forage over 1 acre equals:
    a. Low density (can easily see ground surface through sward) 150 – 250 lbs.
    b. Medium density (can see ground surface if you look hard) 250 – 350 lbs.
    c. High density (no way can you see through to ground level) 350 – 450 lbs.
2. **Determine harvest efficiency –** how much of the stockpiled fescue will be utilized by the livestock and how much will be wasted. The more often the fence is moved the higher the efficiency will be:
    a. Continuous grazing 30 – 35% harvest efficiency
    b. Weekly rotation 40 – 50% harvest efficiency
    c. Strip grazing < 3 days 65 – 70% harvest efficiency
3. **Determine desired intake rate for livestock –** amount of daily forage intake as a percent of body weight.
    a. Dry cows 2.0%
    b. Lactating beef cows 2.5 – 3.5%
    c. Growing animals 3.0 – 3.5%

    (By the way, the same math works for other species of grazing animals as well.)

4. **Determine daily herd needs –** number of cows x average weight x intake rate
5. **Determine acres needed –** herd needs ÷ available forage x days between moves

How to do the math

1. Let's say you determined that the average height of the forage was 10 inches tall and the stand had a medium density. 10 inches x 300#/inch average = 3000 lb. total above ground dry matter.

2. Next, you decided you will move the fence every other day. This should give about a 70% harvest efficiency, so 3000 lbs. total x 70% = 2100 lb. per acre available for intake.

3. Now you need to determine cow intake rate and herd needs. A 1200 lb. dry cow needs about 2% of her bodyweight in forage every day.

4. If you have 50 cows the math would be: 50 cows x 1200 lbs x .02 bodyweight = 1200 lbs. forage per day for the herd.

5. We had 2100 lbs. forage available per acre and the herd needs 1200 lbs. per day. So, 1200÷2100 = .57 acres per day need to be allocated. If we are going to move the fence every 2 days then we would need to allocate .57 x 2 = 1.14 acres every two days.

To figure how large the strip needs to be you need to know the length of the field in the direction the temporary fence will run. Let's say we stockpiled a 20 acre field that is 660 feet across. There are 43,560 square feet in one acre. The math goes like this:

1.14 (acres needed) x 43,560 ÷ 660 ft. (ft across our 20 acres) = 75 foot strip for two days.

In summary, stockpiled tall fescue can be a high quality feed source if managed properly. Properly rationed it can easily cut your winter feed cost in half. By knowing how to produce quality stockpile and then allocating it properly, like we would hay, we can have an economical and efficient winter feeding program in Missouri. This is likely to be your most effective path to greater profitability in the livestock business.

Soil Health Workshop

Fred Martz

The Hamilton Native Outpost was the scene of a Soil Health Workshop, July 6. Amy Hamilton current President of the Missouri Forage and Grassland Council/Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (MFGC) (GLCI) and husband Rex hosted the occasion at their farm and seed company south of Houston, MO. About 60 pasture and native grass & forbes enthusiasts, many which are NRCS and MDC employees, attended. The workshop was well planned and carried out in a timely fashion. Rex and Amy welcomed everyone to the Workshop at 9:30 and introduced the activities. They also introduced Ray Archuleta, NRCS Conservation Agronomist, who was the lead presenter and NRCS Soil Health Spokesperson for the day. Some of his major points follow:

Soil health matters because:

1. Healthy soils are high—performing, productive soils.
2. Healthy soils reduce production costs—and improve profits.
3. Healthy soils protect natural resources on and off the farm.
4. Franklin Roosevelt's statement, "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself," is as true today as it was 75 years ago.
5. Healthy soils can reduce nutrient loading and sediment runoff, increase efficiencies, and sustain wildlife habitat.

What are the benefits of healthy soil?

1. Healthy soil holds more water (by binding it to organic matter, and loses less water to runoff and evaporation.
2. Organic matter builds as tillage declines and plants and residue cover the soil. Organic matter holds 18-20 times its weight in water and recycles nutrients for plants to use.
3. One percent of organic matter in the top six inches of soil would hold approximately 27,000 gallons of water per acre!
4. Most farmers can increase their soil organic matter in three to 10 years if they are motivated about adopting conservation practices to achieve this goal.

Four basic soil health principles to improve soil health & sustainability:

1. Use plant diversity to increase diversity of microbes in the soil.
2. Manage soils more by disturbing them less.
3. Keep plants growing throughout the year to feed the soil
4. Keep the soil covered as much as possible.

Archuleta's presentation was followed by 4 tour stops in the pastures, two before lunch and two after lunch. The first stop (Loren Steele) concerned the use of cattle to utilize and manage diverse warm season grasses and forbs. The Hamilton's have recently begun to utilize the Mashona breed of cattle (about last 2 years). This breed seems to be very hardy and well adapted for pasture utilization. They have good heat tolerance which helps them to adapt to South Central Missouri. The Hamilton's cowherd is smaller (Cows are 900 to 1000 lb.) than the average, but their productivity is a positive trait which may make up for their lack of size.

The next stop (Elizabeth Hamilton Steele) was a discussion of nearly 15 different native forb and grass species. A major point was that each species has an optimum season and place in pasture management of a diverse grassland and together they create wildlife habitat. After lunch the stop was about some advantages (Amy Hamilton) of diversity and the symbiosis among them. The final stop (Ray Archuleta) concerned soil health in warm season pastures. Mr. Archuleta used the Hamilton pastures to illustrate some principles of diversity. After the stops, ice cream was enjoyed by all.

Films suitable for a video about soil health and diverse grasslands with forbs and both warm and cool season grasses have been taken before and during the field day. It is planned to produce this video and distribute it soon.

Upcoming 2017 Grazing Schools

CENTRAL REGION

Wurdak Grazing School

Sept., 27th, 28th, 29th

Dent County Extension

PHONE: 573-729-3196

EAST-CENTRAL REGION

California

Moniteau County Fairgrounds

Sept. 20th & 21st

Nancy Kirby

USDA

Phone: 573-769-2010

NORTHEAST REGION

Linn County

Sept. 14th & 15th

Valerie Tate

Phone: 660.895.5123

SOUTH CENTRAL REGION

Centerville

October 10th – 12th

Joyce Pyles

Jeff Lawrence

Phone: 573-648-1035

SOUTHEAST REGION

TBA

Sept. 7th & Sept. 8th

Selma Mascaro

NRCS Resource Conservationist

Greenville Office

PO Box 489

Greenville, MO 63944

PHONE: 573-224-3410 ext. 3

FAX: 855-835-0067

SOUTHWEST CENTRAL REGION

Benton County

Lincoln, MO

Sept 13th & 14th

Tina Dulaban

SWCD

Phone: (660) 547-2351 ext. 101

Moniteau County

California, MO

Sept. 20th & 21st

More info coming soon

Pettis County

TBA

More info coming soon!

SOUTHWEST REGION

Marshfield, MO

(Daytime)

Sept. 19th, 20th, 21st 2017

Webster County SWCD/NRCS

PHONE: 417-468-4176 ext. 3

EMAIL: Jody.Lawson@swcd.mo.gov

Stockton, MO

(Daytime)

Tues., Oct. 3rd

Thurs., Oct. 5th

Tues., Oct 10th

Thurs., Oct. 12th

Sat., Oct. 14th

Stephanie Auffert

PHONE: 417-276-3388 ext. 3

EMAIL: stephanie.auffert@swcd.mo.gov

Fair Grove, MO

(Daytime)

Oct. 17th, 18th, 19th, 2017

EMAIL: stephanie.auffert@swcd.mo.gov

Greene County SWCD/NRCS

PHONE: 417-831-5246 ext. 3

EMAIL: Mark.green@mo.usda.gov

EMAIL: Eric.Morris@swcd.mo.gov

MISSOURI FORAGE AND GRASSLAND COUNCIL/

GRAZING LANDS CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

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Calendar of Events:

Regional Grazing Schools- April-October, 2017
MFGC Board Meeting (Conference Call)- August 28th at 9:00 a.m.
Deadline for Grasslander Award Nominations- September 15th
MFGC/GLCI Annual Conference- November 6th and 7th in Jefferson City at the Capitol Plaza Hotel
Missouri Livestock Symposium- December 1st and 2nd

Save the date: The **2017 MFGC/GLCI Annual Conference**

will be held November 6th and 7th 2017 in Jefferson City, MO., at the Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center

We hope you can join us this year!

If you have a physical mailing address change or email change, please send an email to Cindy.Thompson@MoFGC.org or mail changes to PO Box 104895, Jefferson City, MO. 65110

As we want to make sure you receive your MFGC/GLCI's quarterly newsletter.

Missouri Grasslands is the quarterly newsletter of the Missouri Forage & Grassland Council/Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative. This newsletter is created by Cindy Thompson, MFGC/GLCI Executive Secretary and edited by Dr. Bruce Shanks, MFGC/GLCI Board Member and Animal Science Professor at Lincoln University.

For more information regarding MFGC/GLCI, please contact Cindy Thompson at: (573) 338-1772, Monday- Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. and Friday 9:00 a.m. – noon, or via email at Cindy.Thompson@MoFGC.org. The MFGC/GLCI website address is: http:mofgc.org Mailing address: PO Box 104895 Jefferson City, MO. 65110

2017 MFGC/GLCI Tentative Conference Agenda

Monday, November 6th

10:00 – 10:45 Registration

10:45 – 11:00 Welcome – Amy Hamilton, MFGC/GLCI President

11:00 – 12:00 Managing Nutrients in a Pasture Eco-System - Ray Archuleta

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch – visit with exhibitors

1:00 – 1:45 300 Days of Grazing – John Jennings

1:45 – 2:15 Break – visit exhibitors

2:15 – 3:15 Holistic Grazing Management – Ben Bartlett

3:15 – 3:45 Break – refreshments and visit exhibitors

3:45 – 4:30 "Integrating Sheep and Goats into a Cattle Operation" – Greg Christianson

4:30 – 4:45 Break (No Refreshments)

4:45 – 5:30 Grazing Cover Crops – Ray Archuleta

5:30 – 6:30 Social/networking – visit with exhibitors

6:30 – 8:30 Banquet

Business Meeting

- MFGC/GLCI report – Mark Kennedy
- Install New Board Members – Amy Hamilton
- Grasslander Awards – Amy Hamilton
- Scholarship Award – Amy Hamilton

Tuesday, November 7th

6:30 – 7:30 MFGC/GLCI Board Breakfast Meeting

8:00 – 9:00 Producer Panel – Mike Kasten and Todd Giesert

9:00 – 9:45 "How Palates Link Herbivores with Landscapes" – Dr. Fred Provenza

9:45 – 10:15 Break – refreshments visit exhibitors

10:15 – 11:00 Audubon Conservation Ranching Beef Program – Max Alleger

11:00 – 11:45 "Missouri's Complex Fence Law-What Have They Changed Now?" – Joe Koenen

11:45 – 12:45 Lunch – visit with exhibitors

12:45 – 1:30 "Ups and Downs of Co-Grazing Sheep and Cattle"– Matt Boatright

1:30 – 2:30 "Mending Broken Links Soil, Plants, Herbivores, and Humans" – Dr. Fred Provenza

2:30 – Adjourn – Begin MFGC/GLCI Board Meeting

Missouri Forage and Grassland Council/Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative

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