



...ONE FARM AT A TIME

By
Charlie Eselgroth

Well, we've made it through another winter. The grass is starting to grow, the cow lot has a bunch of new baby calves, and baby lambs seem to be everywhere. To my mind, there's nothing much better than to be outside during these first balmy days of spring, and to watch a couple of dozen week-old calves frolicking, tails straight in the air, celebrating the fact that they're young, energetic, and the sun is shining! What a great way to make a living!

As I prepare to go into the new growing season, I can't help but reflect on everything that's happened since I planted last season's crop.

First of all is the growth of Innovative Farmers of Ohio. As of this writing we have 67 members. Not bad for an organization that's less than 2 years old. And remember, we have never had a formal membership drive. These members have learned of IFO through word of mouth, attending field days, and various magazine articles. Our mailing list of interested people numbers in the hundreds, and is growing almost daily.

IFO conducted 9 On-Farm Research Trials this year, a number we hope to increase this coming year. I feel that this may be one of the most important things we can do. Too many times I've seen excellent farmers with highly efficient, profitable, although unconventional, operations totally discounted because they didn't have numbers on a piece of paper. Well, we're putting those numbers on paper (and would like to help you do the same). And although our producers that have been using unconventional practices for a long time might not get a lot of use from these numbers, to those like myself that are relatively new to

these concepts, (growing our own nitrogen, for example) these research results can be invaluable.

IFO also sponsored 2 field days, had a booth at the Farm Science Review, and co-sponsored, with the Soil & Water Conservation District, a cover crop meeting in my own county (Ross).

Our General Meeting in January was well attended (80) despite a 4 inch snowfall the night before and another 4 inches falling throughout the day. One fellow told me he drove for three hours without ever seeing the pavement in order to get there. That's dedication! Our keynote speakers were Dick and Sharon

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Keynote speaker Dick Thompson, Executive Vice President of Practical Farmers of Iowa swapping info with Franklin County farmer Asa Chester at IFO's annual January conference.

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One Farm at a Time...

Thompson of the Practical Farmers of Iowa, and we had a diverse set of producer workshops. Much valuable information was exchanged and many new friendships formed.

Two projects are currently under way at Ohio State which members of Innovative Farmers have been invited to participate in. The first is Project Reinvent, which is to re-examine the mission and goals of the College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. Doctors Moser, Newcomb and Trefz attended our annual meeting, where they took part in a "listening session" in which IFO members and guests could voice their opinions and thoughts on the direction of the college. Shortly after the annual meeting, several members of IFO were invited by Project Reinvent to be part of a Sustainable Ag Focus Group, along with members of the Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA) and other individuals from around the state. About a dozen such focus groups, each representing different groups of people from around the state, are to be held. The feedback from these various groups is to be taken into consideration when planning the future direction of the college.



Dr. L.H. Newcomb, Associate Dean, OSU College of Food Agriculture & Environmental Sciences and IFO board member Mick Natco at IFO annual conference.



The Ohio team at the Regional Sustainable Agriculture Extension Training in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, January 4-6, 1995. Left to right; IFO President Charlie Eselgroth, OEFFA rep Ted Bartlett, Keith Dix, Michael Coté, Rich Bennett, Ed Zaborski, Ben Stinner (absent)

Now, at this point I have to say, that although I'm pleased that some people at the university have reached out to us, the jury is still out on whether OSU's future direction will be any more farmer or rural community friendly than it has been in the past. I know that the Administration of the College is under pressure to maintain the status quo or maybe even move further along the path to industrial agriculture. I know that some of the industry representatives on the Reinvent committee have the opinion that "We don't give a damn who raises the commodities, as long as they're plentiful and cheap". That sentiment fits well with words coming from some in the OSU ag economics department that say bigger is better and that we must expand our way to profitability or get a job in town (you'll probably still need a job to make ends meet ED.). At this point, the directors of IFO are in agreement that we should give all the support we can to the ideal of Project Reinvent, but at the same time, we must continue to build a strong, farmer based

organization that promotes practices that allow us to be profitable without gobbling up our neighbors.

The second project at OSU concerns the training of Extension Agents about sustainable agriculture. This agent training was mandated by Congress in the 1990 Farm Bill, however nothing much was done about it until this last year. In January, several members of IFO, as well as representatives from OEFFA, were invited by OSU Extension to attend a meeting of the Midwestern land grant universities in Cedar Rapids, Iowa to discuss and plan the agent training. Here again, this is a work in progress. While we applaud the concept, the outcome remains to be seen. And once again, IFO's response must be the same: give our support, but continue our business of giving farmers factual information. By the way, this would be an excellent time to let your local extension agent know of your needs and interest in sustainable agriculture.

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Board News Short notes from the last board meeting 2/14/95

...have one day workshops on specific ag practices during the year.

...for our third annual IFO conference have a weekend program with workshops all day Saturday with social programs on Friday and Saturday nights and Sunday morning wrap-up. This would need to be held at a convention like facility with room and board available on-site and other amenities for kids (pool, gameroom etc.)

...27 new members in January

...board meeting dates, Tuesdays June 13 1995, Sept 12 1995, Dec 5 1995, Feb 13 1996

Quick!
Turn to the back page
and
Join Now!!!

NEWS FROM THE GREAT LAKES BASIN "COMPREHENSIVE FARM PLANNING NETWORK"

The Great Lakes Basin Comprehensive Farm Planning Network is a new effort recently funded by the Great Lakes Protection Fund. The intent is to develop a basin wide network of individuals and organizations interested in comprehensive farm planning (CFP) and its application as a process to help farmers identify, monitor and change their management systems to preserve or enhance the environment and ultimately, Great Lakes water quality. Although most of the participating grassroots farmer organizations have interacted previously, this is the first formalized network among similar organizations from all of the Great Lake States (except Illinois) and Ontario. The primary objectives of this network are:

- *to develop criteria for evaluating currently available CFP tools*
- *to demonstrate the use of these CFP tools on farms around the Great Lakes Basin*

The kick-off meeting, attended by members of each of the network organizations, was hosted by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, in Toronto on April 21-22. During this meeting, the OSCIA provided an in depth background and a training in the Ontario Environmental Farm Plan to the steering committee. Now, on to the work in each state!

Why focus on comprehensive farm planning?

Comprehensive farm planning, also referred to as whole farm planning, total

resource management, and integrated farm planning, is quickly gaining momentum as a good way for farmers to demonstrate and improve their stewardship of land and water resources. The goal of CFP is to provide an integrated approach to farm management which simultaneously addresses the environmental, economic and social dimensions of farming. It is an alternative to the piecemeal approach to environmental protection which requires farmers to have individual management plans for erosion, woodlands, water, wildlife etc. Farmers have to manage specific problem fields or farmstead areas to be in compliance with regulations, and, at the same time, consider the whole farm operation, their personal goals for the farm and the farm's profitability. In weighing options for changing practices to protect the environment, a farmer has to look at the potential trade-offs of these alternatives for both the fields and the whole farm. It makes sense to work with a farm plan that encompasses the whole farm, and not just the individual component parts.

Where CFP has been successfully used, it has been a voluntary, farmer driven approach to farm planning and environmental protection. Farmers:

- *assess the environmental impact of their own farm*
- *evaluate options for change to decrease impact while maintaining farm economic viability*
- *prioritize changes that need to occur*
- *develop action plans to address these changes*
- *implement changes independently or with agency support*

Because farmers do it, these plans are very site specific and account for the differences between farms and watersheds in ways better than an imposed, environmental regulation could ever hope to achieve.

What does a Comprehensive Farm Plan look like?

A CFP might take different forms, depending on the tools available to the farmer. Some of the currently available CFP tools are computer programs, such as 'Planator', or worksheets, such as 'Farm-a-Syst' or the 'Ontario Environmental Farm Plan'. Holistic Resource Management, another CFP tool, is a decision making model. To be a useful CFP tool, these must help a farmer assess and compare their various farming operations for ecological and economic viability across the whole farm and then help identify management changes to minimize the environmental impact of their whole farm. Coming up with alternatives for the action plan may require some innovation or suggestions from other farmers, ag. agencies or consultants.

The CFP should not be a document that sits in a file somewhere. Ideally, it would be a working plan that is continuously updated as changes are made, helping a farmer track the economic and environmental impact of these changes. It may be, as with the Ontario Environmental Farm Plan, a confidential document that a farmer can use to prioritize areas needing improvement before pursuing cost share or funding to make the changes. The important point is that farmers control the process, and make these decisions based on a greater understanding of their own farm and the environment around it, always in the context of their personal and family goals.

Other reasons to consider Comprehensive Farm Planning

The process of CFP helps a farmer enhance the environment and water quality around (and under) their farm while maintaining or enhancing the

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...THE GREAT LAKES BASIN "COMPREHENSIVE FARM PLANNING NETWORK"

economic profitability of the whole farm. This protects the land, water and wildlife resources for ourselves, our children, and the surrounding communities. This type of proactive, voluntary farmer effort would also improve the non-farming public's perception of agriculture. In addition, implementation of CFP and action plans may demonstrate to government and environmental regulators that:

- *given information and support, farmers can maximize both profit and wise stewardship on their own, without more regulations*
- *one comprehensive farm plan may suffice for compliance to the current environmental protection measures*
- *a CFP may be used to qualify farmers for future natural resource based programs*
- *some future regulatory legislation may not be necessary with farmer voluntary action to protect the environment*

OHIO-IFO Activities as part of the Network

Currently we are developing a working group to oversee the Ohio activities under this grant. This working group will be comprised of individuals from extension, NRCS, The Nature Conservancy, and OEFFA, as well as IFO farmers. Our objectives will be to gather information on the various CFP tools currently available, develop criteria for evaluating these tools, get training in these different tools, and then try these out on farms in the Lake Erie Basin. As described earlier,

there are a few tools out there that are being promoted as CFP tools (Planetor, Ontario Environmental Farm Plan, Holistic Resource Management, Farm a Syst). Each of these may have different strengths and weaknesses, and our job is to try and evaluate how easy they are to use, what kinds of information a farmer gains from them, and how the information helps generate a viable action plan. We may create a sort of directory of CFP tools which a farmer can use to choose one for their own farm, based on their resources (i.e. computer) or the complexity of their operation.

An example of a farmer trial might involve attending a training on the CFP tool, then going through the whole farm assessment and planning process. In the end, an action plan will be developed with any needed help from other farmers, agency individuals or researchers. From this effort, we hopefully will be able to demonstrate that this is a process by which many diverse farmers can voluntarily take stock of their own operations and make changes that minimize the impact of their farm on the environment.

Future IFO newsletters will provide more detail on specific comprehensive farm planning tools that are available or being used, like the Ontario Environmental Farm Plan, as well as updates on Ohio activities. If you would like more information on the project, are interested in being part of the working group, or may like try out one of these CFP tools on your own farm, please contact Anu Rangarajan at (216)263-3645.

RESOURCES – ATTRA Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas- and its' newsletter -ATTRA news

A key source of information for rural people, "*dedicated to helping communities and individuals find sustainable ways of improving the quality of life, using skills and resources at hand*". If you need answers to almost any question, they will provide them. Frame your question succinctly- "*What's currently available in small scale implements for draft animals?*"- and in 2 or 3 weeks you'll receive a package of data, info and sources that will fill in all the blanks. You can reach them toll free at 1-800-346-9140 or by mail at Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas, P.O. Box 3657 Fayetteville, Arkansas 72702

Following two articles from ATTRA:

2nd Edition SAN Directory ON SALE NOW!

The newly released 2nd Edition, Sustainable Agriculture Directory of Expertise is now on sale.

This electronic version of the popular directory contains a total of 932 individuals and organizations willing to share sustainable agriculture know-how and skills with others. It's available on a 3.5-inch computer diskette (compatible with MS DOS systems) which allows users to browse through the directory like an electronic book, jump from section to section via hypertext links, or search for keywords anywhere within a document. Users can print out desired information or save it to a file.

To order, please send \$14.95 to Sustainable Agriculture Publications, Hills Building, Room 12, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405. Make check or money order payable to "Sustainable Agriculture Publications."

Purchase orders can be mailed to the above address or faxed to 802-656-4656. Special bulk order discounts are available. Questions about directory orders should be directed to Meredith Simpson at the above address or by phone at 802-656-0471.

Ayers reviews ALBC pub

ATTRA Technical Specialist Anne Ayers, who serves as a board member of the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy (ALBC), is reviewing the manuscript of a new ALBC handbook. With a working title of "The Conservation Breeders Handbook," the book explains primary concepts of animal breeding, breeding methods (such as inbreeding and linebreeding), and the importance of a guiding philosophy.

For more information, please contact: ALBC, Box 477, Pittsboro, NC 27312, (919) 542-5704.

"events" CALENDAR

INTEGRATED C R O P MANAGEMENT FIELD DAY

GENERAL INFORMATION

Date: June 28, 1995
 Location: East Badger Farm - OARDC
 Times: Tours will be held at 9:00 am and 2:00 pm
 Contact: Rob Gallagher (216) 263-3878

Objective: Growers are faced with the difficult task of managing crops in a cost effective, environmentally responsible manner. Soil erosion and off-site movement of herbicides and fertilizers are among the key environmental concerns today. The Integrated Crop Management Field Day will focus on management strategies for no-till corn and soybean based systems designed to reduce input costs while improving the environmental picture of these systems. Weed control will be highlighted, but nutrient management and soil conservation will also be addressed. Some conventional tillage strategies will be covered. Field demonstrations will include:

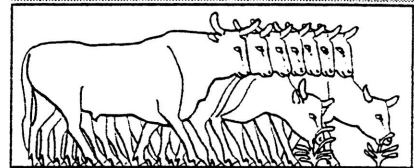
- Hairy Vetch and Winter Wheat Cover Crops
- Row Cultivation for High Residue No-till
- Reduced Rate Herbicide Programs
- Split/Reduced Rate Postemergence Herbicide Programs
- Night Time Tillage to Reduce Weed Emergence
- Site Specific Nitrogen Management Tools

OTHER FIELD DAYS AND SPECIAL EVENTS FOR 1995 FROM OHIO STATE

- June 8, Hay and Pasture Day, OARDC's Jackson Branch, Jackson.
- June 21, Southern Ohio Crop Diagnostic Field Day, Fayette County Farm, Washington Court House.
- July 14-15, Wooster Garden Festival, OARDC's Wooster Campus.
- July 25, Field Crops Day, OARDC's Northwestern Branch, Hoytville (Wood County).
- July 27, Muck Crops Day, OARDC's Muck Crops Branch, Celeryville (Huron County).
- Aug. 9, Vegetable Crops Day, OARDC's Vegetable Crops Branch, Fremont (Sandusky County).
- Aug. 16, Turfgrass and Ornamental Research Field Day, Ohio State's Columbus Campus.
- Aug. 17, Piketon Horticultural Field Day and Open House, Ohio State's Piketon Research and Extension Center, Piketon.
- Sept. 7, Swine Day, OARDC's Western Branch, South Charleston (Clark County).
- Sept. 19-21, Farm Science Review, Ohio State's Molly Caren Agricultural Center, London.

These events are open to the public. Admission is free except for Farm Science Review.

MORE EVENTS OF INTEREST



On June 24, 1995, Twinbill Jersey farm of Burbank, Ohio (just north of Wooster) will host the OHIO GRAZING FIELD DAY

for the Great Lakes Basin Intensive Rotational Grazing Network. The activities begin at 9:30 am. Morning sessions will include paddock and land development with Geotextile Cloth, fencing, water systems, dairy nutrition and raising heifers. The afternoon will be pasture walks on both the Twinbill farm and Bryn-Royal Farms. For more information, contact:

Mark Bennett, Grazing Coordinator, East District of Ohio, Knox Co. Ext. Tel: 614-397-0401

From
SMALL-SCALE AGRICULTURE TODAY
 Office for Small-Scale Agriculture USDA

Item 1: "For the fifth consecutive year, orders for organic food rose more than 20 percent, according to a survey by the Natural Foods Merchandiser. The total organic food bill: \$1.89 billion." (Kernels, September/October 1994, p. 18)

Item 2: "One in three shoppers seeks out organically grown fruits and vegetables, and more would probably do so if organic produce cost less and looked better." (The Wall Street Journal, Sep 23, 1994, p. B1).

MEMBER'S FORUM

**CAUTION!
THIS AREA
CURRENTLY UNDER
CONSTRUCTION!**

We want to hear from you.

As members of IFO, this newsletter is meant to inform you and to be a forum for your ideas.

If you want to express your feelings about something we've done or said as board members or if you wish to give your opinion about any farm related topic, please send us a letter or message to either of the addresses at the bottom of this column. We promise to read everything you send us and will print as much as we can (space permitting). We reserve the right to edit what you send us (not for content, just for readability).

If you'd like to submit an article about something you're doing or something you feel would interest other members, please contact us by mail or phone and we'll talk about your concept.

Gathering the information necessary to put this newsletter together in a timely fashion can be difficult, so the more input we have from you the better it will be for everyone involved.

Thank you to all have shown support for what IFO is trying to do.

*If you have internet access
you can leave messages
for us at...
ferrucio@aol.com or you
can send regular mail to
IFO
16354 Claridon-Troy Road
Burton, Ohio
44021
Phone me at
voice: 216-834-4757
fax: 216-834-0370
Mick Natco-Editor*

INTERNET NEWS

Following is a message intercepted on the net that some of you may find of interest:

From: fease@tape.enet.dec.com
(Andrea Midtmoen Fease)
Newsgroups: misc.rural
Subject: New Mail List for Domestic Birds (chickens, etc.)
Date: 10 APR 95 09:49:40
Organization: Digital Equipment Corp., Shrewsbury MA

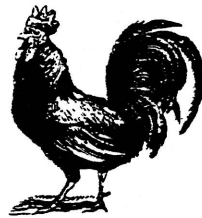


Hi, I thought I'd point out a new mailing list for domestic birds. Enclosed is the announcement:

DOM_BIRD@PLEARN.EDU.PL - For owners, breeders, and farmers of domesticated birds DOM_BIRD is a new list for owners, breeders and farmers of the wide variety of domesticated birds. This list was created for the express purpose of discussing anything from the nutritional requirements of your breeders, to the shows and events held for displaying the many variety of fancy breeds of domesticated birds. If you wish to discuss equipment used for incubating eggs, the veterinary care and management of adults or chicks, or find the best way to handle any aspect of domesticated bird ownership, you are welcome to join DOM_BIRD. In the future, DOM_BIRD may also serve as a gateway to a newsgroup on domesticated birds, so that a wider audience can be reached.

Domesticated birds can be classified as (but not limited to) those birds that could possibly be found in a typical farmyard. The following are some examples of domesticated birds:

- | | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|
| Peafowl | Turkeys | Guinea Fowl |
| Doves | Pheasants | Emus |
| Quail | Ostriches | Ducks |
| Rheas | Geese | |
| Chickens - commercial and fancy breeds | | |
| Pigeons - homing and fancy breeds | | |



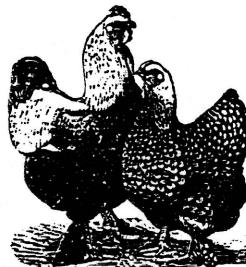
DOM_BIRD will NOT be a place for campaigning for the rights of animals, debating the ethics of maintaining or hunting of domesticated birds, discussing the pros and cons of vegetarianism, or the swapping of recipes. This is, first and foremost, a list for people who enjoy and prosper from a relationship with domesticated birds.

In summary, anything that may be related to all types of domesticated birds and/or human-domesticated bird interactions may be posted here.

To subscribe to DOM_BIRD, send the following command to LISTSERV@PLEARN.EDU.PL in the BODY of e-mail:

SUBSCRIBE DOM_BIRD first name last name
For example: SUBSCRIBE DOM_BIRD Jane Doe

Kathryn A. Smith
katsmith@vt.edu
Blacksburg, VA
DOM-BIRD and EXOTIC-L list owner



MORE INTERNET NEWS

SUBJ: PUBLICATION - ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES TO ON-FARM RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGE

To whom it may concern...

Here's a freebie. Request your free copy of the new Publication - Alternative Approaches to On-Farm Research and Technology Exchange

From CSAS003@UNLVM.UNL.EDU

The latest thinking about on-farm research was presented at a symposium in Seattle at the American Society of Agronomy annual meetings, November 1994. Seven of the papers presented at that symposium, along with reprints of a dozen recent papers about on-farm research, have been published and made available by the Center for Sustainable Agricultural Systems, a unit within the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Partial support of the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program is gratefully acknowledged. Single copies of the book can be mailed to addresses in the U.S. without charge, as long as supplies last. A table of contents and several of the papers will be available on the sustainable agriculture gopher in the near future; routing: ianrvn.unl.edu (select IANR Information, then Sustainable Ag.) Partial contents of the book:

Decision Case Studies

(Kent Crookston, UMinn);

Use of On-Farm Research by Farmers for Technology Development

(Stewart Wuest et al., WSU);

Best Information for Choosing Crop Varieties

(Dale Hicks and Bob Stucker, UMinn);

Adaptability Analysis for Diverse Environments

(Peter Hildebrand and John Russell, UFla);

Use of the Focus Group

(Dyvon Havens et al., WSU);

Complementary Abilities and Objectives

(Rick Exner, ISU);

Credibility of On-Farm Research in Future Information Networks

(Chuck Francis, UNL).

For a copy, send request to csas003@univm.unl.edu or hit reply button to this message; fax 402-472-4104; call 402-472-2056; mail Center for Sustainable Agricultural Systems, 225 Keim Hall, Univ. Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68583-0949.

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...One Farm at a Time



at the IFO annual conference...

Ohio grazier George West (left), who presented an involving workshop on rotational grazing, speaking with Dean of the OSU College of Food Agriculture & Environmental Science Dr. Bobby Moser, who spoke to the conference members about Project Re-invent.

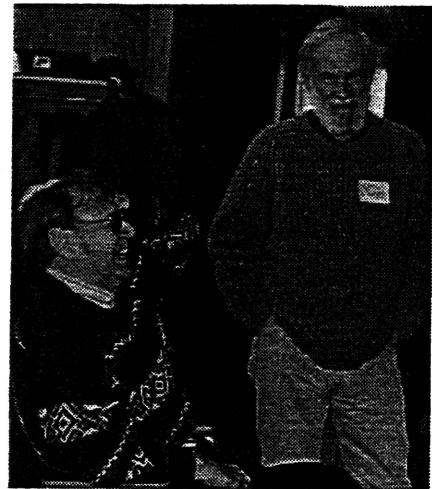
As you can see, there are some things to be optimistic about, but a lot of work needs to be done also. And as we go into the '95 growing season, think about what you want farming to look like 10 or 20 years from now (and what your children's children's children want farming to look like ED.). But as you do, remember, it does no good to make enemies. I know several farmers who have had great success using alternative production practices, but when called upon to talk about their methods, will antagonize everyone within 10 minutes by being a bit too self-righteous. A good rule to follow was told to us by Dick Thompson at our annual meeting. Get along, but don't go along. Wise words from a man that has spent almost 20 years

encouraging farmers to think for themselves.

In closing I want to wish everyone a safe and profitable growing season. The next full Newsletter you will receive will be around September 1, and you will be receiving mailings throughout the summer outlining field days, upcoming events, and items of interest.

And remember,
we can change the future of agriculture,
slowly,

ONE FARM AT A TIME.



at the IFO annual conference...

Dr. Clive Edwards (left), Director of the OSU Sustainable Agriculture Program and Keith Dix, Training Coordinator, North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Training



at the IFO annual meeting...

IFO President Charlie Eselgroth (left) speaking with Mardi Townsend, grazier and OSU Extension Agent, Geauga County.

OSU EXTENSION EXPERTS TO PROVIDE "TEAM" TO SUPPORT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

STEVE BAERTSCHE - Assistant Director

*Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension, 32 Agriculture Administration Building
2120 Fyffe Road, Columbus, Ohio 43210 • Phone: (614) 292-4077 • Fax: (614) 292-3747*

First, I would like to thank IFO for the opportunity to write a brief article on some new educational teams that have been formed within Ohio State University Extension. We feel that these teams will provide educational programs that will be based on assisting farmers to make sound production and financial management decisions. The formation of these teams is aimed both at improving communications within our own faculty, and to better meet the needs of our clientele groups that we serve.

As of April 1, 1995, nine interdisciplinary teams have been formed:

TEAM COORDINATOR/PHONE

Ohio Nursery/Landscape/Turf Team
Jim Chatfield (216) 263-3831

Floriculture Industry Roundtable of Ohio
Charles Behnke (216) 322-0127

Northeast District Dairy Excel Team
Bruce Brockett (216) 533-5538

Ohio Vegetable Crops Team
Ron Overmyer (419) 334-6340

Ohio Swine Educator's Team
Dan Frobose (800) EXT-PORK

Ohio Forage Utilization\IRM Team
Hank Bartholomew (614) 385-3222
Mark Bennett (614) 397-0401

Ohio Watershed Management Network Team
Eric Norland (614) 688-3441
Dennis Hall (513) 644-8412

Ohio Agronomic Crops Team
Greg LaBarge (419) 337-9210
Howard Siegrist (614) 349-6900

Ohio Small Fruits Team
Richard Funt (614) 292-8327

Management Excel - Many of our commodity teams will utilize "Management Excel" principles to develop intensive educational programs aimed at progressive managers. To date, Dairy Excel, Hort Excel, Vegetable Excel, Pork Performance Plus, Grain Management Excel and Farm Management Excel are active programs that are being used by Extension clientele. These comprehensive educational programs are designed to incorporate decision making software and long term goal setting to aid Ohio Producers in their everyday management decisions.

I have included the phone numbers of these team coordinators for your assistance. Please feel free to contact these individuals personally for questions or to offer suggestions on how we can better serve IFO educational needs. Our team coordinators will be meeting with IFO leadership in the near future to discuss how we can work together to assist with educational programming and information sharing.

1994 IFO cooperators:

Charles Eselgroth, Ross County:
Nitrogen management, cover crops.

Rich Bennett, Henry County:
Cover crops, nitrogen management.

Rex Miller, Wayne County: Nitrogen management.

Joe Logan, Trumbull County: Nitrogen management.

Frank Lucas, Ross County: Cover crops.

David Meyer, Putnam County:
Commercial soil biological activator.

Back to the Future: Year Round Grazing in Ohio

by Hank Bartholomew, Southern Ohio Grazing Coordinator and Ed Vollborn,
Extension Agent Agriculture - Reprinted by permission STOCKMAN GRASSFARMER



GALLIA CO., Ohio: Several years ago when we mentioned the possibility of year-round grazing, most livestock producers in Ohio rolled their eyes. Today many livestock producers have set goals to extend their grazing season and hope to eventually develop a system whereby winter feeding of stored feed will be an exception rather than the rule (the traditional Ohio cow-calf producer expects to feed hay for 5 months).

Grazing year-round can dramatically lower the feed costs of live stock producers, while increasing their profit margin in an increasingly competitive world. Owning the equipment to harvest hay is a luxury that most producers can not afford. Large operations with over 200 brood cows may be the exception, however we have been amazed by the interest from larger producers to get involved in Management Intensive Grazing (MIG) and extended grazing.

Labor is a management problem on the larger operations. Managers see the new concepts as a means of reducing and spreading the labor needs and thus helping solve one of their biggest problems. Only 8.5% of Ohio's beef cows are on farms with over 100 cows. 94.8% of Ohio beef farms have 49 or fewer cows.

A study of optimal forage harvest technologies for eastern Ohio beef cow-calf herds done in 1989 calculates that large round bales for a 40 cow herd cost \$148 per ton of dry matter (D.M.) where hay cost for a 100 cow herd would be reduced to \$100 per ton. Both of those costs far exceed the value of the hay.

Obviously, a larger producer which has more animals to spread fixed costs over has an advantage over smaller producers. By their calculation, the hay costs for a 400 cow herd would still be \$77 per ton.

The point is it is much too expensive for a small or part-time farmer to own much equipment to harvest hay. Small square bales are a much less expensive systems but few of the farmers I deal with want to go back to those.

Hay may be much less expensive to purchase than to make yourself. Maintaining good relations with a neighbor who owns a baler is another good idea. Have your neighbor custom harvest your surplus grass. The neighbor can also lower his fixed costs on his hay by doing some custom work.

A second problem with hay is the variety of places hay is lost or wasted. The losses start with mowing and conditioning 13.2%, raking 1%, baling losses for small, square bales 2.8% and large, round bales 10.2%. Storage losses can range from 5% to 30% and feeding losses another 5% to 10%.

Total losses from the system will range from 27% to over 50%. Field stockpiling forages for fall and winter grazing also includes some wasted forage due to trampling and soiling

losses but certainly no worse than an average, big round bale system and potentially much better if strip or rotational grazing is practised.

Jim Gerrish's work indicates that the % utilization of field stockpiled forage can be as low as 30% when cows are given large areas at a time, similar to giving them free access to your whole hay supply. Utilization can be as high as 70% when cows are given a 3 day supply of forage. Our Kiwi friends achieve 80-90% utilization by moving the fence 1 or 2 times a day during the winter.

Another study of 25 Ohio beef cow calf producer costs was conducted in 1987. These herds were not selected at random but were recommended by knowledgeable observers as being among the best in Ohio. The results of this study confirm that beef cows need to be scroungers in order to have a chance to be profitable, particularly at today's lower prices for cattle. The eight highest cost herds had average hay costs of \$299 per cow per year and total feed costs of \$354 while the eight lowest cost herds had average hay costs of \$78 and total feed costs of \$154. This difference in hay cost of \$221 per cow for the low cost versus the high cost producer is where we must focus our attention on cost reduction in order to increase profits.

Once again, we have met the enemy and it is heavy metal.

These two studies provided us with a focus point to increase livestock profitability by decreasing stored feed costs. My co-workers and I began to explore extending the grazing season in 1989, looking at the brassicas family (turnips) and field stockpiling of tall rescue. In 1990, cereal rye was added to the mix to provide high quality forage for the late winter. Our recent work, which will be detailed in future articles, builds upon several years of work by Dr. Robert Van Keuren, a forage scientist at The Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station in Wooster, done in the late 1960's and 1970's.

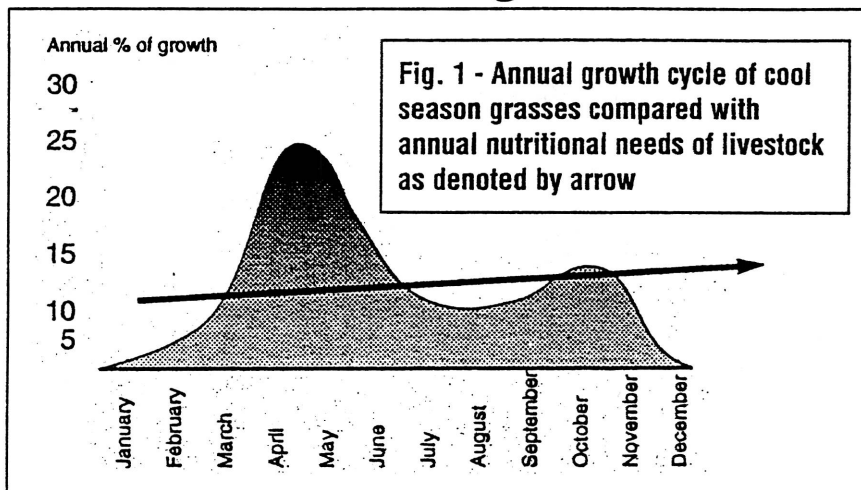
Dr. Van Keuren made a harvest of hay with a small, round A.C. baler and left the bales in the field. He then field stockpiled the forage and grazed the regrowth and hay during fall and winter. The modern tools of rotational grazing were not available 25 years ago, so cattle were shifted to a new area only once a month or so in most of his studies. Big round balers came along and Dr. Van Kueren's ideas were forgotten.

To design a grazing system to maximize the amount of animal harvested forage, we must first understand the growth cycle of cool season grasses which form the bulk of our forages in the Midwest.

Cool season grasses begin growth early in the spring (late March in southern Ohio) and have a long growing season often into November. Their peak growth rates occur in May during

continued on page 10

Year Round Grazing in Ohio - cont'd



the spring flush. Much of this growth results in reproductive organs, which lowers the quality of pasture. Plants which we allow to have sex in May will tend to rest in June. The closer a plant gets to sexual fulfillment, the longer the rest period.

Figure 1 shows the normal growth curve in a normal year. The line represents the animal nutritional requirement from a spring cow-calf herd which increases as the calf grows. As is apparent from the figure and experience, we typically are short on pasture during July and August and then again from November until April.

The other critical element is matching the nutritional requirement of the animal to the growing season as do seasonal dairy producers. Calving in April or May for beef cows will reduce the quality and quantity feed required as opposed to calving in late winter. Early weaning of calves can also be used to get beef cows into good condition prior to winter and allow a producer to use animal stored fat as an energy source. Fat cows stay warm easier and have lower energy requirements than thin cows. Medium

size cows can lose 150 to 200 lbs. over the winter as long as they are gaining weight during the last month of pregnancy and through the breeding season. Sheep producers should consider pasture lambing in April or May. You'll love your sheep a lot more if you don't spend winter in the barn with them and they'll make you a lot more profit.

EASY AND CHEAP WAYS TO EXTEND THE SEASON

MIG grazing is a requirement, in our opinion, if you are going to get serious about year round grazing. The control gained over animals and the forages can easily extend the grazing season in Ohio by 6-8 weeks.

In the spring, the paddocks should be large with rapid rotations or the animals dispersed in a set stocking arrangement to allow the earliest possible grazing and gain some control of the soon to come spring flush. After the spring flush period and seedheads are controlled, pastures can be rotated with ever increasing residuals of forages left in the paddock to build a cushion of feed for possible summer slump periods. In late July or early August forage should be further conserved for the winter period. This is when early weaning of calves makes sense. The calves can be the 1st graziers with the cows serving as the cleanup crew. The calves will continue to have rapid gains on the best pasture, while you are halfway to a preconditioned calf.

This late July - early August period is when producers in our area have to make

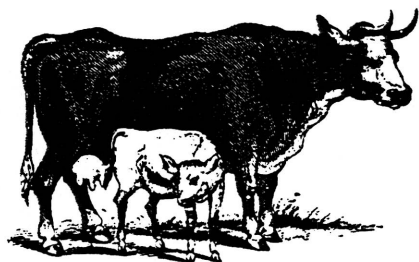
things happen to prepare for winter grazing. This is when turnips are planted, nitrogen applied to cool season pastures and tall fescue stockpiling begins for the winter. We are in our second season of working with several farmer-cooperators on a winter grazing project where D.M. and forage quality is determined monthly as well as condition of the animals, all supplemental feed and labor is recorded. The winter of 93-94 was one of the hardest on record in Southern Ohio with record low temperatures of -30°F to -40°F and the ground covered with snow and/or ice for 6 weeks. Even with this kind of weather, one cooperator had winter feed costs of \$35.00 per cow using stockpiled fescue. One of his neighbors, who wasn't a cooperator, wintered his cows on only 1/2 of a large round bale per cow. This autumn (1994) has been dry, but warm and sunny. We'll share both winter's summaries in a subsequent article.

Tall fescue, even endophyte infected Ky 31, is the basis for winter grazing systems. 50 - 75 Lbs. of a non-volatile nitrogen source such as ammonium nitrite should be applied around August 1 in Southern Ohio (earlier as you go further north) and remove animals from the area.

Many of you may be reluctant to apply N believing that the percentage of legume in your stand will be reduced the next season. While this is true for spring applied N it is false for late summer N applications.

One acre of stockpiled fescue in a year with normal rainfall should provide between 2 and 3 tons of dry mater per acre. This is an adequate amount of feed to carry a 1200 lb. cow from December 15 to March 1 assuming she's not calving prior to April 1.

While clover contributes some N to fescue during the fall, it's growth and nitrogen production slows greatly in the cooler and shorter days of the late summer. We think you need to apply N even when you have up to 30% of the stand composed of legumes. If the stand is over 30% legume it should be used during the fall rather than saved for winter. Legumes do not maintain their quality into winter and breakdown rapidly after the first hard freezes.



The nitrogen also improves the fescue quality and the livestock will graze it closer to the ground which opens up the sod for more successful frost seeding of legumes. The key is to have other pasture available until December 15 to save the fescue for winter. Tall fescue, because of its waxy cuticle, retains its nutrients longer than any of the other cool season grasses.

Applying N to other cool season pastures can greatly increase yield in the autumn. 50 Lbs. of N should give you an additional ton of dry matter. At \$.30 per lb. for nitrogen and with 70% utilization, you can produce 66 days of extra feed for a 1200 lb. cow at a cost of \$.22 per day.

The turnip crops can also be utilized for the period prior to December 15. In 1994 our Brassicas (Turnip Family) research plots yielded an average 7500 lb. of alfalfa quality pasture in the period between planting July 28 and harvest October 30 (90 days). Corn stalks if available are another excellent choice for autumn pasture. This leaves the month of March as a deficit period. We are currently exploring several types of cereal rye to give us early pasture in March and April. Some operations may want to include some of the warm season grasses for drought insurance in the summer. Switchgrass and Caucasian Bluestem are the easiest perennial warm season grasses to establish in our area.

We really believe that over a several year period, year round grazing in Southern Ohio can reduce feeding of hay or other stored feeds to 3 to 4 weeks.

When a producer has had that experience for several years, they can then eliminate most of the overhead costs associated with making hay. The farmers that love to own, operate and repair equipment can make the hay and those who would rather manage a grazing system can either hire them or buy hay from them.

The Stockman Grass Farmer is published monthly by the Mississippi Valley Publishing Corp. Editorial and advertising offices are located at 5135 Galaxie Drive, Suite 300C, Jackson MS 39206. Business Office phone (601) 981 4805, fax (601) 981 8558; Advertising Office phone (601) 483-0633, fax (601) 485-5599. Advertising office mailing address: P.O. Box 3516. Meridian, MS 39303.

Ad rates, editorial calendar and copy deadline on request. North American subscription rates (USA, Canada, Mexico) are US \$44.50 for two years and US \$24.50 for one year. Overseas subscriptions are US \$90 for two years and \$60 for one year. Second class postage paid at Jackson, MS and at additional mailing offices. Prices good through 6/1/95.

The Stockman Grass Farmer,
P.O. Box 9607
Jackson, MS 39286-9607.

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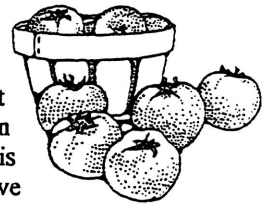
Are you in the livestock business OR are you really in the Grass Business?

HEADACHE OF THE CENTURY

The short-sightedness of computer programmers 30 years ago will result in a major headache for mainframe operators when the clock ticks one second past midnight on Dec. 31, 1999. In an effort to save two bytes of memory, many programmers eliminated the first two digits of the year in software essential to the functions of some of the world's biggest financial and business institutions. The problem can be fixed through recompiling (translating machine code into programming language, changing the date fields and recompiling into binary code) but most experts agree that it will take several years to reconfigure all the "bad" data. (Tampa Tribune 3/6/95 B&F3)

ATTENTION GROWERS

On Saturday July 1st, the North Union Farmers Market will make its debut at Shaker Square in Cleveland, Ohio. This open air market will give farmers an opportunity to sell home-grown produce directly to consumers in a densely populated, and affluent community.



A group of volunteers has spent hundreds of hours laying the groundwork for this market. Their purposes include supporting local small farmers, preserving vanishing farmland, establishing a supply of healthful food, and promoting community spirit. The name of the market honors the North Union Shakers, early settlers of this region who embodied self-sufficiency and respect for the land.

The types of products to be offered include fruits, vegetables, eggs, honey, maple syrup, flowers and plants, and home-baked goods. Farmer/producers will park their vehicles in the center of Shaker Square and pay a fee for 12 feet of frontage. Hours of the market are 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays from July 1st until October 28th. This is the markets first year and will in the future start earlier in the season.

Please note that all items for sale must be grown or produced by the seller. Please tell anyone you know who may be interested and help make the North Union Farmers Market a success!

Late Breaking News...

They will provide tables and umbrellas, and the cost (\$135.00 for 18 weeks) will cover a food handlers license.



For further information...

North Union Farmer's Market
P.O. Box 221272
Beachwood, Ohio 44122
email: barbjbchin@aol.com
or by phone...

Donita Anderson (216) 751-3712 and please mention where you saw this information.

Ag "Marketing Workshop" Held at Annual Meeting

A group of approximately 30 lively folks attended and participated in the workshop presented by Vinton County poultry farmers Herm Beck-Chenoweth and Linda Lee (Linda is also a VISTA volunteer with Rural Action in Athens, Ohio, working as an Agricultural Marketing Specialist).

Main topics covered were: What is Marketing? and How to direct market agricultural products.

Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) rules and regulations which apply to selling meat and poultry products. There were 26 different items mentioned by participants as products they would like to sell including; grain, fiber, red meat, poultry products, rabbits, pets, fruits, vegetables, herbs, dairy products (both bovine and goat), legumes, pottery, dried flowers, and forest products.

Some direct marketing methods presented were: Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), buying clubs, Farmers Markets, local grocery stores, restaurants and other institutions, on the farm, and roadside stands.

Specific information about how to legally sell red meat and poultry retail to consumers and institutions was given. ODA exemptions which apply to the small poultry producer were explained.

If you have questions, please feel free to call Linda, (usually after dark is best) at (614) 596-4379.

RESOURCES - continued

"Planting the Future: Developing an Agriculture That Sustains Land and Community," 232 pages, is \$14.95 plus \$3 postage from Iowa State University Press, 2121 S. State Avenue, Ames, IA 50014; 1-800-862-6657.

"The Profitability of Four Sustainable Farms in Minnesota" is available free of charge from Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Energy and Sustainable Agriculture Program, 90 West Plato Boulevard, St. Paul, MN 55107-2094; (612) 296-1277.

"The Grass Is Greener: Dairy Graziers Tell Their Story" is \$5 plus \$2.50 shipping/handling from Wisconsin Rural Development Center, Inc., 125 Brookwood Drive, Mount Horeb, WI 53572; (608) 437-5971.

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Name(s): _____

Address: _____

City: _____

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Phone: _____

Do you receive a significant part of your income directly from farming activities?

Yes — (this entitles you to a Regular Membership with voting privileges)

No — (this entitles you to an Associate Membership without voting privileges)

What type of farming operation do you have?

Membership dues are \$15.00/year or \$10.00/year for students. Please make check or money order payable to "Innovative Farmers of Ohio" and mail to:

Innovative Farmers of Ohio
3083 Liberty Road
Delaware, Ohio 43015

Cut or copy this form and send it with your membership dues