

UTILIZING HOLISTIC PLANNED GRAZING AS A REGENERATIVE ENGINE FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
"Building Relationships and Meeting Farmers Where They Are"
 Project Team: Tony Bishop, Philip Metzger, Lauren Lopez, Jennifer Coffey, Jim Weaver, Betsy Lorrain, Nancy Glavin, Laura Havel, Stacy Koch

The Story
 This comprehensive, "built from the resources of" grazing training program for Northeast agency service providers, extension educators and farmer-leaders focuses on building local institutional capital while learning along side farm families to ensure the knowledge we want to regenerate agriculture, sustainability and foodlands will grow. Through the process of regenerating farm family goals and better decision-making dynamics, teaching holistic planned grazing techniques and tools, monitoring and measuring ecological and financial health, we inspire an increased network of highly trained, knowledgeable grazing professionals to meet the ever-increasing demand for educational and technical assistance for farmers of all shapes and sizes tapping into the potential of Northeast pasture.

Project Performance Targets:
 30 extension educators, coordinated by professional, ground-level educators and/or farmer-leaders from the Northeast SARE region are trained and utilize holistic and planned grazing strategies to 120 farms, representing 24,000 acres, of which 72 farms on 14,400 acres develop and implement a holistic planned grazing system. We estimate impacts on these 72 farms will be (1) \$2,000 increase in profitability, (2) increased production, (3) added production, (4) increased production, (5) increased production, (6) increased production, (7) increased production, (8) increased production, (9) increased production, (10) increased production, (11) increased production, (12) increased production, (13) increased production, (14) increased production, (15) increased production, (16) increased production, (17) increased production, (18) increased production, (19) increased production, (20) increased production, (21) increased production, (22) increased production, (23) increased production, (24) increased production, (25) increased production, (26) increased production, (27) increased production, (28) increased production, (29) increased production, (30) increased production.

Accomplishments to Date

- 41 grazing professionals from NY, PA, VT and NH representing Cornell University, University of Vermont, USDA-NRCS, grazing consultants and farmer-leaders have completed 3 grazing training sessions per state in 3 regions. 11 learned how to create farm family goals with their participating farms and establishing social and financial health data to measure impacts of the grazing plan implementation. 21 learned more about holistic planned grazing methods, tools and approaches. 31 gained practical knowledge of biological monitoring, data collection and learned the value of regenerating the 4 ecosystem processes.
- 30 project participants are working with over 70 farms to implement holistic grazing plans.
- 100% of participants indicated they have used the tools and strategies to address their knowledge base with the most potential for holistic grazing plans, biological monitoring and developing farm family goals.
- 80% of farmers have completed a viable farm goal, 60% have completed a monitoring plan and 70% have completed a written grazing plan.
- The planned grazing and training the land lessons brought together over 80 highly qualified extension and service providers, extension educators and local farmers to join the learning experience in addition to the project participants.
- Working with NY, PA, VT, the Northeast Organic Farming Association, Farm Credit, SWCD, Lewis Co. ECC, NEPA, NY and the Cattaraugus County, PA 11 groups, provided in-kind, 175 company resources and their local and grazing tools of implementation on the risk-free, no-cost planned grazing monitoring chart.
- 30 grazing charts have been printed and provided to a diverse group of small, early farmers farming a planned grazing plan.



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The Grazing Professionals



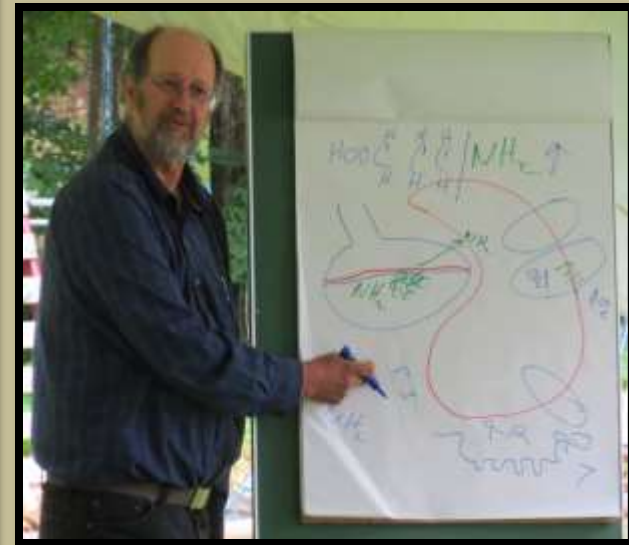
The Grazing Professionals



The Grazing Professionals



The Teachers



The Teachers



The Teachers



Workshops, Field Days and Conference Trainings



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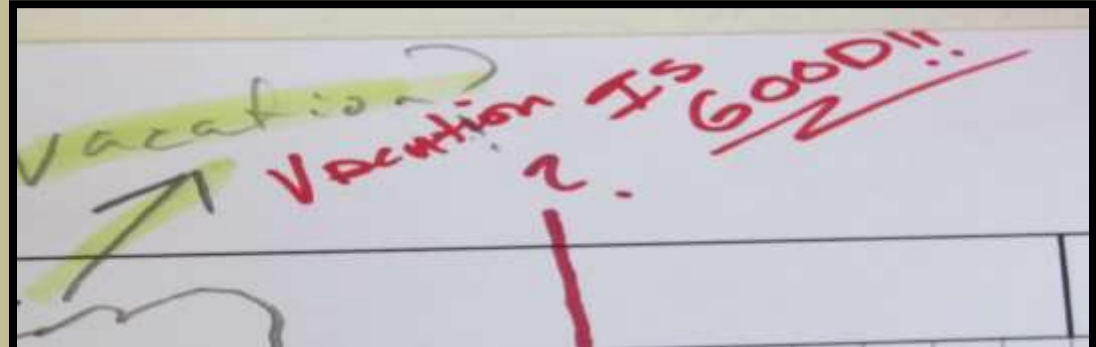
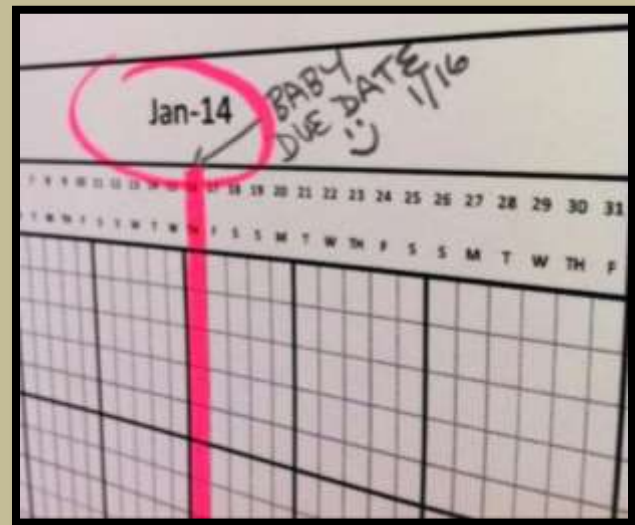
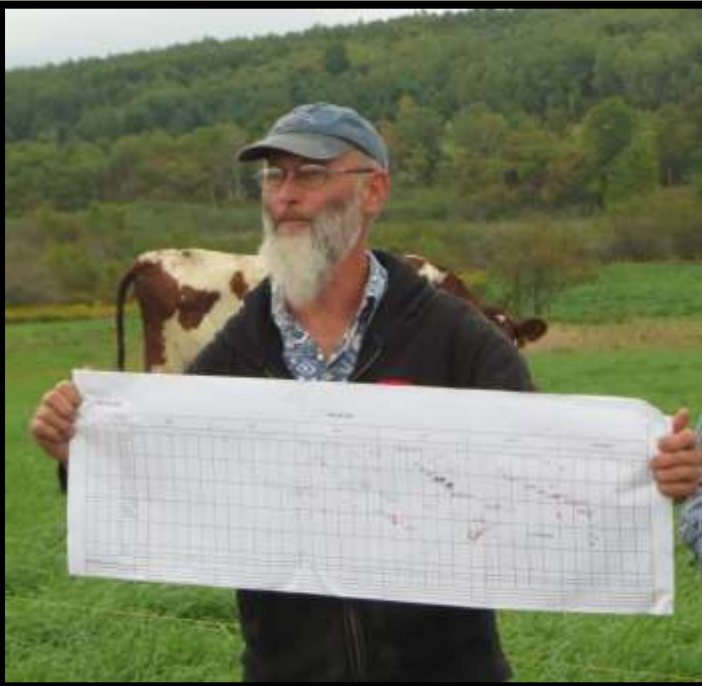
The Local Food



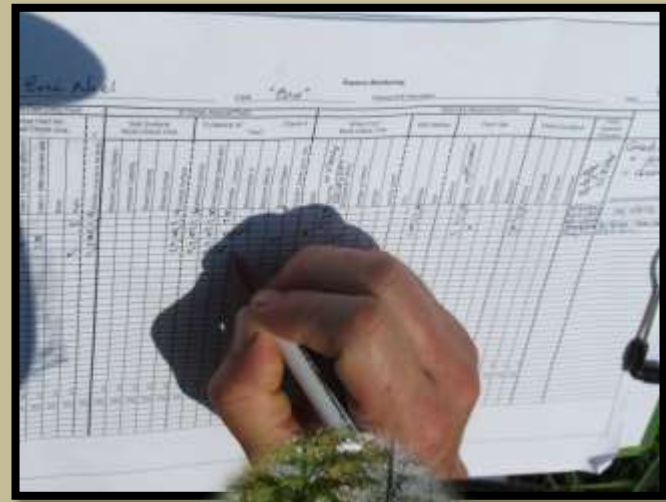
The Local Food



The Grazing Charts



Biological Monitoring



The Scenes



Weeds become alternative forages

by Troy Bishop
 WILLSBORO, NY — As pastures continue to dry up, alternative forages (previously called weeds) are filling in to supply cattle with nutritious feed; as long as cattle get the knowledge to eat them that is. Enter Kathy Voth, Colorado's nationally acclaimed author and teacher/trainer of how to turn cows into weed managers. "Thistles are as beautiful as roses," she proclaims.

To make believers out of grazers and their animals, the "make peace with weeds" gal teamed up with the UVM Center for Sustainable Agriculture on a week-long training in support of their USDA-NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant. Her final training, near the shores of Lake Champlain was working with the Essex & Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation Districts and their sponsors at Shaun and Linda Giltland's, Ben Wever Farm in Willsboro, NY.

Kathy opened the day by pointing out to the capacity crowd that we have been fighting the war on weeds for centuries believing we could win. She debunked the notions that weeds are bad and animals only eat certain forages (cows only eat grass and legumes for instance). "We have put ourselves in a box on our thinking but we must punch our way out of it," she emphasized. Her take home message to grazers was two-fold: Animals are really flexible on what they eat and weeds are really good forage.

She guided the audience through her seven-day cow training regime while highlighting animal behavior nuances and practical tips to harvest these



The new class of North Country weed managers

alternative forages. "We are creating a language," she said. "Cows can be as good as goats at browsing plus they stay in the fences." According to her cited resources, weeds like knapweed, thistles, nettles, milkweed, burdock, bedstraw and even multi-flora rose leaves are highly nutritious and add quality and quantity to pasture swards. "We just have to train cows that these new foods are good and let them choose right along with other pasture plants. Forcing them to eat weeds as the last resort in a pasture is a recipe for disaster on animal performance."

Chef Linda treated the group to a spectacular lunch featuring their own hamburgers and potato salad,

post salad and tomato-zucchini tartis all made with vegetables from their neighbors at Juniper Hill Farm CSA.

After lunch Shaun talked about the cited resources, weeds like knapweed, thistles, nettles, milkweed, burdock, bedstraw and even multi-flora rose leaves are highly nutritious and add quality and quantity to pasture swards. "We just have to train cows that these new foods are good and let them choose right along with other pasture plants. Forcing them to eat weeds as the last resort in a pasture is a recipe for disaster on animal performance."

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is seeing them teach their herd mates and offspring because learning from mom is the biggest influence."

John Bingham of Wild Orchard Farm in nearby Whallonsburg, NY, came to learn so he could teach his custom grazed dairy heifers to manage the forbs on his property. "I'm really interested in teaching more farmers about rotational grazing in the north country and using these diverse plant communities to build soil health and create more local food."

Josh and Sarah Vallancour from Woven Meadows Farm in Saranac, NY, shared their desire to use this venue to maximize pasture usage and take back some fallow land infested with bedstraw with animals instead of tillage. "We were fascinated by the animal behavior culture Kathy talked about and how she reminded us what we used to feed our animals like carrots, beets, steamed vegetables and other alternative forages not necessarily from the grain family."

Organizer Tiffany Pinheiro commented on how this new aspect of training can be good for the animals, land, water and its stewards given the financial and environmental rewards. "We are committed to providing practical educational programs that bring farmers and consumers together to explore different options of doing business that enhance our natural resources. I know I'll never look at weeds (forages) the same way again," she said.

This event was sponsored by the Essex County and Franklin County Soil & Water Conservation Districts, America's Great Outdoors, Central NY RC&D Council, Northeast SARE, & the Adirondack North Country Association along with hosts, Shaun and Linda Giltland.

To obtain the how to book or video on teaching cows to become weed managers, visit Kathy Voth's website at www.livestockforlandscapes.com.

Photos by Troy Bishop



Organizers — Essex Co. SWCD District Manager David Rockahn, Kathy Voth, Essex Co. SWCD Conservation Specialist, Tiffany Pinheiro, Franklin Co. SWCD Conservation Technician, Patricia LaValley

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to see what
 are Quality

Our people must learn to diversify. We need to be able to adapt in order to survive. We need to be able to adapt to a changing world. We need to be able to adapt to a changing world. We need to be able to adapt to a changing world.

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Out to Pasture

Biologists at a former pasture with in Fort Plain, N.C., study the area around the farm for biological life.

Hitting the Bull's-Eye with Biological Monitoring

Tom Brouwer
 The Daily Conversation

PORT PLAIN, N.C. — Bill Hartman is a retired soil scientist who has worked for the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He is now a consultant and is working with the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to study the area around the farm for biological life.

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Healthy Pastures = Healthy Herds and Happy Farmers

Healthy pastures are the foundation of a successful farming operation. They provide the best environment for your livestock to thrive and produce. Healthy pastures also help you save money on feed and veterinary costs. So, if you want to be a successful farmer, you need to invest in your pastures. There are many ways to do this, from rotational grazing to using cover crops. The key is to find the right approach for your farm and your goals. Healthy pastures are the key to a healthy herd and a happy farmer.

Cover Photo: Our cover picture features a red and white Holstein owned by Adams Liddle. It is pastured on Dunbar Hill Road in the Town of Greenwich. It was snapped by local photographer Corina Adrich. Corina grew up on a dairy farm in Northern New Hampshire in an area much like Washington County. After attending SUNY Cobleskill, she moved to Haddon. She is a self-taught photographer and is continually refining her craft. She enjoys taking photos in and around Washington County of animals and landscapes that make it such a beautiful place to live.

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who Inspired, Supported and Participated in our
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