Louisiana Forage Farmer

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Articles

LFGC Membership Dues

The LFGC annual membership dues for 2019 are now due. If you did not pay your annual dues at the LFGC annual meeting in December, please fill out the form at the end of this newsletter and send it in as soon as possible. LFGC strives to put on some excellent programs and the organization needs your involvement. If you want to continue to receive this newsletter and other publications from LFGC and AFGC, please send in your dues today or you risk being dropped from the membership list.

LFGC 2018 Meeting Summary

Forage producers discussed the benefits of good soil health at the Louisiana Forage and Grassland Council annual conference on December 7 in Alexanadria. Farmers and ranchers from areas around the state heard from a variety of speakers about what works best in pastures, for pollinators and in wildlife food plots. The annual meeting featured presentations from U.S. Department of Agriculture and LSU AgCenter professionals along with private

producers who have unique forage production operations. LSU AgCenter forage specialist Ed Twidwell, secretary for the council, said each year the organization tries to bring in speakers who can cover a variety of topics, which include vendors and producers to give their experience in growing forages.

Dr. Ray Smith, professor and plant breeder with Texas A+M AgriLife, talked about this 40 years of forage legume breeding and the cooperation between Louisiana and Texas breeding programs. "We like to work together where we have similar soils and are able to help each other to develop a forage that works well in both locations," he said. "We depend on AgCenter breeders to help in developing legumes and other forages and to find out what problems producers may be having with new plants."

Ray Smith, forage breeder from Texas A+M AgriLife talks about his 40 years of forage legume breeding.

Dr. Guillermo Scaglia, an AgCenter animal scientist, discussed the importance of linking forage testing to beef cattle nutrition. "We want the producers to understand the needs of different cattle such as bulls, mature cows and heifers," he said. "We also talked about the importance of different types of forages as well as supplemental feeding." Cooper Hurst, a cattle producer from Woodville, MS, presented information on the importance of regenerative ranching, focusing on grazing and soil health. Hurst discussed the importance of moving the cattle to fresh pasture in rotational grazing. "We are building our soils and building the resiliency and improving our water infiltration," he said. "We can't make it rain, but we can control how much runs off and how much is absorbed by the ground." Katy Bridges, an LSU graduate student, followed up with the results of her soil health research project.

Chris Ebel, range management specialist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service and president of the council, said the topics for the meeting don't change a lot from year to year, but it always is of interest to cattle producers, pollinators and those interested in forage for wildlife. John Pitre, also of the NRCS, stood in for state conservationist Kevin Norton to give an update on the programs of his agency. The conference ended with the annual business meeting where Jeff Foster, of Dubach, LA, became the new president of the organization for 2019.

LFGC Master Forage Producer Award

At the LFGC annual meeting on December 7, Mr. Conner Hays was awarded with a Master Forage Producer award for 2018. Conner manages the Krause and Managan Ranch, just north of Sulfur, LA. The ranch is primarily a cow-calf operation consisting of about 400 crossbred mother cows grazing on about 1600 acres. Calves are sired by black angus bulls with a 90-day breeding season from mid-April to mid-July. F-1 replacement heifers are produced from Grey Brahman bulls on angus cows. Ranch pastures consist of a wide variety of forages including: bahiagrass, bermudagrass, carpetgrass mixed with various natives, ryegrass, clovers, forage radishes and turnips, wheat, oats, brown top and pearl millets, sorghum-sudangrass, sunn hemp and cowpeas. The warm-season perennials make up the bulk of the summer grazing on about 1500 acres. Conner normally uses a no-till drill to plant the summer and winter annuals. Cool-season annuals are planted on about 300 to 400 acres and warm-season annuals are planted on about 80 acres. Some of the annuals are planted with some seedbed prep and some are drilled into stands of existing perennial grasses with no seedbed prep. The diverse forage base benefits soil health and reduces nutrient inputs.

Rotational grazing is managed to maintain desirable forages and desired animal performance. There are some periods when rotational grazing is very intensive and other periods of the year when the rotation is much less intensive, depending on weather conditions, the forages available, rate of forage growth, and desired animal performance. Livestock water systems have been developed so that pastures can be grazed and rested independently depending on conditions. As much as practical, forages are stockpiled to reduce the amount of hay that is fed. Most of the hay that is fed on the ranch is produced on the ranch. When necessary to maintain animal performance, grazed forages or hay are supplemented with protein and/or energy supplements. Prescribed burning is also one of the tools that Conner uses to manage forages/pastures on the ranch. Unwanted brush is a constant challenge on this ranch.

Conner Hays, right, received the 2018 Master Forage Producer Award from LFGC President Chris Ebel

Mr. Hays hosted a pasture walk on the ranch in April of 2017, providing an opportunity for area cattle raisers to see and hear about different things he is doing with forage and grazing management. Conner is an active member of the Louisiana Grazinglands Conservation Initiative (LGLCI) committee, representing Southwest Louisiana and providing valuable input to

the committee from experiences on the ranch. He has taken an active part in several LGLCI field days state-wide. He also hosts field days annually for McNeese State University agricultural students that come to the ranch to see and learn about an actual, large-scale cattle operation.

Most often, cattle producers are reluctant to try new forages or adopt new or different management ideas and practices. Conner is way ahead of most managers in the state. He is one of the most progressive young managers in the area with a work ethic unmatched. He is not afraid to experiment with new ideas in his constant quest to improve on what he is already doing. Conner observes very carefully what is happening with the land and livestock. He listens to what other experienced cattlemen say. Then he decides for himself on the way to proceed ahead with the management of forages and livestock on his ranch. He understands that as a cattle producer he is a forage/grass farmer first. Conner devotes a great effort to organizations like LGLCI to learn from innovative producers and share what he has learned with others. There is not another forage/producer/ranch manager in Louisiana that is more deserving of this award.

Acadiana Beef Cattle Producers Field Day

Date: Saturday, March 9
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Plance: Iberia Research Station, Jeanerette
Registration starts at 8:00 a.m.

Indoor Program
Toxic Plants for Beef Cattle
Mouthing Cows for Age Estimation
Market Update

Outdoor Program
Mouthing Cows for Age Estimation: Live Demonstration
Nitrogen Fertilizer Sources: Field Demonstration
Forages, Supplements, and Digestion: What Happens in the Rumen?
Louisiana Master Farmer Program Update

Door Prizes and Lunch Provided

Sponsors: LFGC, LCA, LSU AgCenter
Contact person: Dr. Guillermo Scaglia 337-276-5527

Soft Rush Control in Perennial Warm-Season Grass Pastures

E.K. Twidwell, R.E. Strahan, M.D. Voitier and A.L. Granger
LSU Agricultural Center

Soft rush (*Juncus effuses*) is a clump-forming perennial plant that often infests

low-lying areas in Louisiana pastures. This species is commonly referred to as bull rush. It grows to a height of 2 to 5 feet, and reproduces by seeds and rhizomes. It is not a palatable species for livestock to consume. Control measures include clipping and herbicide treatment. Clipping provides some level of control, but is not a long-term solution. The objective of this study was to compare 7 herbicide treatments for control of soft rush in a pasture composed primarily of carpetgrass (*Axonopus affinis*). Treatments were applied on July 24, 2018. The experimental design was a randomized complete block with three replications. Four of the treatments were broadcast-applied and three were spot-treated on individual soft rush plants. Visual control ratings were taken 36, 77 and 92 days after treatment. Spot-treating individual plants with 2% glyphosate provided near 100% soft rush control. Spot-treating with 2,4-D provided better control than using broadcast 2,4-D applications. The herbicides Permit and Outrider did not provide satisfactory soft rush control in this study. Results of this study suggest that soft rush can be effectively controlled via spot-treatment with either 2,4-D or glyphosate herbicides.

Source: 2019 AFGC Proceedings

Assessment of Annual Ryegrass Ecotype on Cattle Performance

S.M. Montgomery, J.L.Morrison and B.S. Baldwin
Mississippi State University

Annual ryegrass (*Lolium multiflorum*) can be divided into two ecotypes: diploid (2n=2x) or tetraploid (2n=4x). Past work suggests tetraploids have increased seedling vigor, more robust growth and thus a greater yield. However, there has been conflicting research suggesting no difference in yield between tetraploid and diploid varieties exists. If there is no difference in yield between ecotypes, is there a weight gain advantage in cattle grazing tetraploid cytotypes? To determine if there is an advantage in average daily gain(ADG) in steers grazing diploid and tetraploid ryegrass, a grazing study was set up at Mississippi State University Prairie Research Unit in Prairie, MS. Four common varieties, two diploid (Marshall and TAM 90) and two tetraploid (Jumbo and Nelson) were planted in 2.5-acre pastures replicated four times. Two steers were randomly assigned to each of the 16 paddocks for a 56 –day grazing period. Weight gains were taken for each steer pre-, mid- and post-grazing throughout the season as a two-day

mean. First year results indicate no difference between ADG of cattle grazing based on cytotype, but there were differences for cattle by variety. At 56-d ADG of cattle grazing Jumbo was greatest (2.45 lbs/d); followed by cattle grazing Marshall (1.92 lbs/d); TAM 90 (1.84 lbs/d) and Nelson (1.76 lbs/d). Other variables measured included: herbage mass, dry matter yield (DMY), in vitro dry matter digestibility (IVDMD) and relative forage quality (RFQ).

Source: 2018 AFGC Proceedings

Balancing Mixed Rations with Grazing Using NIRS for Pasture Analysis

T.C. Griggs, West Virginia University

Pastures can present limitations to daily dry matter (DM) and nutrient intake by grazing animals. Energy supplementation is commonly used to maximize pasture utilization while meeting more of the nutritional demands of high-producing dairy cattle than can be provided by pasture alone. Partial mixed rations that complement pasture nutrient intake to support a target level of milk production can be challenging to formulate because of temporal and spatial variability of pasture mass and composition, excessive levels of protein and protein degradability in pasture herbage, and inaccuracies in predicting DM and nutrient intake by grazing animals. Pasture DM intake remains one of the most difficult nutritional parameters to predict accurately from herbage compositional information. While near-infrared reflectance spectroscopy (NIRS) is widely used for determination of the composition of dried, ground forage samples, proximal analysis of intact pasture canopies is a relatively undeveloped approach that can improve predictions of daily DM and nutrient intake. Proximal analysis refers to remote sensing with hand-held or other ground-based spectral sensors. Although numerous problems remain to be resolved, there is increasing evidence for the possible role of proximal analysis of pasture canopies. The purpose of this study is to show that DM intake may be readily evaluated via field spectroscopy to support formulation of mixed rations for pasture-based dairy production.

Source: 2018 AFGC Proceedings

LOUISIANA FORAGE AND GRASSLAND COUNCIL

ACTIVITIES:

* ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN DECEMBER

* TOURS AND FIELD DAYS
* STATE HAY SHOW

* QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER
* RECEIVE THE FORAGE LEADER, A NATIONAL PUBLICATION FROM AFGC

* RECOGNIZE OUTSTANDING PRODUCERS

Membership Application Form Louisiana Forage and Grassland Council

NAME

_____

DATE_____

MAILING ADDRESS

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CITY

_____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

EMAIL ADDRESS

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Annual Dues are $35

Make checks payable to LFGC or the Louisiana Forage and Grassland Council

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