

2013 VFGC Advanced Grazing School

July 22 Clermont Farm, Upperville, VA

8-8:30. Registration and Welcome.

8:30-12:00 Opening Session with Jim Gerrish.

12:00-1:00 Lunch Provided.

1:00-4:30 Session with Jim Gerrish.

July 23-24 Shenandoah Valley AREC, McCormick Farm

The session will be held in the Bank Barn across from the office.

12:30-1:00 Registration and Welcome. No lunch.

1:00 - 430 Session with Jim Gerrish.

430 - 600 Dinner with Jim Gerrish.

July 24 , 2013

8:30 - 12:00 No Lunch Provided.

July 25. Southern Piedmont AREC, Blackstone, VA

8-8:30. Registration and Welcome.

8:30-12:00 Opening Session with Jim Gerrish.

12:00-1:00 Lunch Provided.

1:00-4:30 Session with Jim Gerrish.

For more information go to www.vaforges.org

Program Registration

No refunds for cancellation after July 1, 2013

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\$150.00 early registration per attendee

Registration Must be Posted Marked
by July 1, 2013

Check location you are attending
____Clermont Farm Upperville, VA
____Shenandoah Valley AREC, McCormick Farm
____Southern Piedmont AREC, Blackstone, VA

Harlan White Scholarship Fund
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Make Check Payable to:
VFGC

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2013 Advanced Grazing School
Margaret Kenny
3599 Indian Oak Road
Crewe, VA 23930

The Management Calendar

By Gordon Groover Extension Economist, Department of Agricultural & Applied Economics, Virginia Tech

Listed below are the items that need to be included on the farm business managers' calendar for spring of 2013.

- Make sure your Virginia state income taxes returns were in on time.
- Review first quarter livestock records and compare them to last year’s; look for problems and successes.
- Livestock producers should develop a detailed feed budget each year. Include current feed costs, estimate this year’s production under average and drought conditions, and estimate demand until a full year out. Deficits should be addressed now. First, look locally for alternatives. For example, can you contract with a neighbor to buy their forages or grains, can you rent additional land, can you work with a grain farmer to harvest his grain crop as silage, can you buy grain at harvest at a discount, or consider high moisture grain? Second, if you cannot find local solutions, then look to reputable brokers for forage and try to line up part of your supply needs this spring. As the season progresses, keep the budget up-to-date to make sure you have covered your feed demand for the next year. Conversely, if you expect a surplus begin to consider alternatives to increase cash income and cash flow.
- Follow up with your lender to review and update your line-of-credit needs because higher feed, fuel, fertilizer, and input other prices may strain previous estimates.
- Prepare your crop record keeping system for a new year, updating soil tests and reviewing and problems from last season.
- Update your marketing plan by collecting information on prices and world market situations. Be sure to check with your local Farm Service Agency for changes in government programs and signup deadlines. Review USDA and other crop and price forecasts. You can receive notification of all USDA reports now via many different media. See the following web site for details: www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?navid=USDA_STR

Listed below are the items that need to be included on the farm business managers’ reading list and calendar for the next two months.

- **Interested in a Microloan?** Yes, Take a look at the **Farm Service Agency (FSA) web site and look for the section titled “Farm Operating Loans & Microloans,” visit your local FSA office, or click here [Microloans](#).**
 - **Overview of the program: FSA developed the Microloan (ML) program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and the smallest of family farm operations by modifying its Operating Loan (OL) application, eligibility and security requirements. The program will offer more flexible access to credit and will serve as an attractive loan alternative for smaller farming operations like specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA). These smaller farms, including non-traditional farm operations, often face limited financing options.**
 - **Microloans can be used for all approved operating expenses as authorized by the FSA Operating Loan Program, including but not limited to:**
 - **Initial start-up expenses**
 - **Annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents**
 - **Marketing and distribution expenses**
 - **Family living expenses**
 - **Purchase of livestock, equipment, and other materials essential to farm operations**
 - **Minor farm improvements such as wells and coolers**
 - **Hoop houses to extend the growing season**
 - **Essential tools**
 - **Irrigation**
 - **Delivery vehicles**
- The National Ag Risk Library is a repository of excellent educational materials for farmers, educators, and service providers to agriculture and is found at www.agrisk.umn.edu. Some recent additions to the library are:
 - Farm employee management: employment eligibility verification - the basics of form I-9 compliance. Author Melissa O'Rourke, Iowa State. <http://agrisk.umn.edu/Library/Display.aspx?RecID=4917&NEW=1>.
 - Flexible Farm Lease Agreements. Author William Edwards, Iowa State. <http://agrisk.umn.edu/Library/Display.aspx?RecID=4919&NEW=1>
- Need to find information about Virginia’s Population, Income, Food Insecurity, Education, and Employment, Federal Funds, Organic Agriculture, Farm Characteristics, and much more (links to county-level data are included when available). Then follow this link to USDA-Economic Research Service State Fact Sheets: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/state-fact-sheets.aspx#.UVrY2FeQMmx>.

Should I Bale Hay in 2013?

By: Peter Callan, Extension Agent, Farm Business Management, Northern District

During the winter months, many producers finalize their projected crops acreages for the coming year. Numerous farms in Virginia produce hay to sell as a cash crop and/or feed to livestock during the winter months and times of drought. Some farmers give little consideration to these questions about their hay enterprise, how much does it cost to produce a ton of hay or does baling hay generate a profit or loss?

Virginia Tech crop budgets show that it costs ~\$155 to produce a ton of mixed hay. Using late winter 2013 fertilizer prices, the budget shows that there is ~\$72 of fertilizer in a ton of mixed hay. Since every bale of hay that leaves a field is exporting nutrients from that field, the nutrients must be replaced to maintain fertility. Otherwise, nutrient levels will be depleted.

Frequently, producers make hay because they own the equipment. The question that needs to be asked is, can the hay enterprise generate sufficient returns to cover both the variable (e.g. fuel, labor, repairs, twine) and fixed costs (e.g. depreciation, insurance, interest, taxes) of owning hay equipment? In the long-term all costs, fixed and variable, must be covered to have sufficient funds or borrowing capacity to replace equipment and machinery that wears out or become obsolete.

Dairy farmers and horse owners demand higher quality hay and routinely pay higher prices for hay that meets their quality standards. To consistently sell into this premium market hay must be bright green, leafy, soft and free of dust, mold and weeds. Quality must be the primary focus to serve this market. Based on historical prices in the Shenandoah Valley, hay producers have consistently received \$200 -\$225 per ton for premium mixed grass/alfalfa and grass hays. For producers who are able to consistently harvest and sell high quality hay the cash-hay enterprise can be a profitable addition to the farm business. It takes the same amount of nutrients and other inputs to grow high quality hay that is cut early, compared to lower quality hay cut late in season.

In contrast to the higher quality hay, the Shenandoah Valley hay market has discounted late-cut hay selling in the range of \$15 - \$20 per 1,000 pound round bale in the Shenandoah Valley. This equates to \$30 to \$40 per ton which is far below the production cost of \$155/ton. Hay sold at this price range does not cover the costs of the primary nutrients (N,P, and K) exported from the farm in each bale of hay.

Producers who have difficulty producing higher quality hay should consider profitable alternatives that capitalize on their skills and land base, for example, purchasing hay from off farm sources making sure to match hay quality to the needs of the animals being produces on their farms. In addition, the purchased hay will provide nutrients to the fields where it is fed. Other profitable alternatives could include rotational grazing, expanding pastures (and potentially increasing animal numbers) to include current hay lands, making hay on shares with a neighbor that has a reputation for quality hay production, or fall stockpiling forages for winter strip grazing.

Profitable hay producers should identify markets and consistently produce a quality product that meets the needs of their customers, know the total cost of production, and seek to price their hay to generate a profit over all costs. A highly profitable farmer who regularly sold hay to dairy and horse markets stated “I am not in farming for cheap exercise. I am not going to work all my life and all I have is a yard full of worn-out machinery to show for it.

If I can’t make money growing a crop then the equipment will sit in the shed.”

The most important decision a hay producer can make is to spend time calculating his production costs before the start of the new crop year. An analysis of prior years’ records is a good start and will indicate if he has made money growing and baling hay in previous years. This analysis will help guide you to choosing a profitable alternative. Best wishes for a safe and profitable 2013.



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Nutrients Page 3

These results confirm the idea that nutrients are efficiently recycled and retained in pastures. Soil pH likely declined as a result of leaching as rainwater moved through the soil profile. The decline in phosphorus may have been related to the transportation of nutrients from general grazing areas to less productive areas, such as near waterers. These results would likely differ depending on the soil type and larger losses are expected in heavily stocked continuously grazed pasture soils. Soil testing at least every five years is recommended to ensure adequate conditions for pasture growth, and the strategic placement of hay feeding can help to replenish essential soil nutrients. The use of supplements containing macronutrients appears to be unnecessary for dry beef cows on this type of pasture, but supplementation with salt and micronutrients is still recommended.



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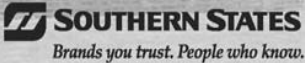
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July 22 Clermont Farm Upperville, Virginia;
July 23-24 Shenandoah Valley AREC, McCormick Farm;
July 25. Southern Piedmont AREC, Blackstone, Virginia.
www.vaforges.org

2013 Field Day Shenandoah Valley AREC
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Terry Slusher 1956 Rush Fork Rd, SW Floyd, VA 24091	Dr. Ben Tracy 425-A Smyth Hall (0404) Virginia Tech Blacksburg, VA 24061
Danny Boyer 8784 Spring valley Rd Fries, VA 24330	Dr. John Fike 365 Smyth Hall Virginia Tech Blacksburg, VA 24061
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Charlie Wootton Piedmont SWCD 100-B Dominion Dr. Farmville, VA 23901	Dr. Vitalis Temu Virginia State University M.T. Carter Building Room 238 Petersburg, VA 23806
MANAGING EDITOR, VA FORAGER & ADMIN ASSISTANT Margaret J. Kenny 3599 Indian Oak Road Crewe, VA 23930	

Characteristics of Women Farm Operators and Their Farms

Robert A. Hoppe and Penni Korb

What Is the Issue?

The share of U.S. farms operated by women nearly tripled over the past three decades, from 5 percent in 1978 to 14 percent by 2007. Although there have always been women farm operators, national-level statistics to track their numbers and examine their characteristics were not available until the Census of Agriculture began asking for principal farm operators' gender in 1978. Using census data from 1978 through 2007, this report provides detailed information about women farmers and the types of farms they operate.

What Are the Study Findings?

In this report, "women-operated farms" are defined as those whose principal operator—the individual most responsible for the day-to-day decisions of the farm (or ranch)—is a woman. Based on this definition, results of the analysis were as follows:

- **Women-operated farms increased in all sales classes.** Between 1982 and 2007, the number of women-operated farms grew from 121,600 to 306,200, with increases in all sales classes (measured in 2007 dollars). In contrast, the number of men-operated farms declined by 220,800, with only the largest and smallest sales classes (\$500,000 or more and less than \$1,000) experiencing growth. Some of the increase in the lower sales classes, however—for both women- and men-operated farms—was due to extensive methodological changes in the Census of Agriculture, introduced over time to include more small farms.
- **Most women-operated farms are very small.** Since 1982, a majority of women-operated farms have had annual sales of less than \$10,000. Most of the growth in the number of women-operated farms occurred in that sales class, increasing from three-fifths of all women-operated farms in 1982 to three-fourths by 2007. In both years, the share of women-operated farms with sales less than \$10,000 was about 20 percentage points more than the share of men-operated farms with sales that low.
- **Five percent of women-operated farms (15,400 farms) had sales of \$100,000 or more in 2007.** Most of these farms specialized in grains and oilseeds, specialty crops, poultry and eggs, beef cattle, or dairy. The poultry and egg specialization alone accounted for roughly half of women-operated farms with sales of \$1 million or more.
- **Nearly half of farms operated by women specialized in grazing livestock.** In 2007, 45 percent of women-operated farms specialized in raising beef cattle other than in feedlots (23 percent), horses and other equines (17 percent), or sheep and goats (6 percent). Most of these farms, however, were very small, accounting for only 16 percent of sales by all women-operated farms.

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New Study Initiated on Mob Grazing, Soil Health and Environmental Protection

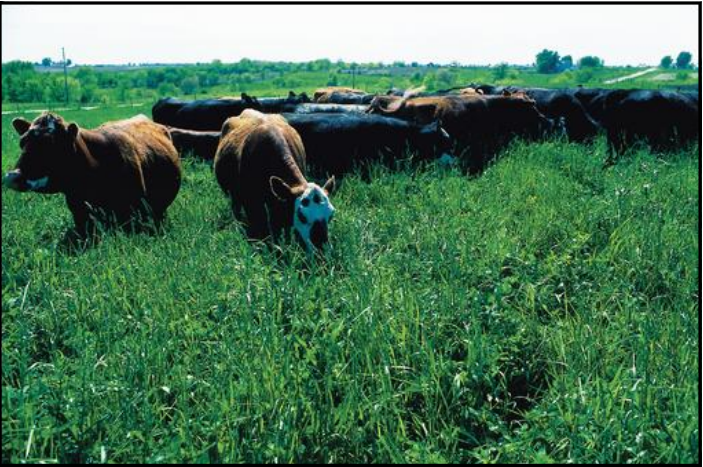
By: Ben Tracy

In the fall of 2012, myself along with a group of Virginia Tech researchers received a Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) from USDA-NRCS to demonstrate how different types of managed grazing might effect the soil health and other variables. The project will focus around comparisons among continuous, rotational and so called "mob grazing". Mob grazing in particular has received a lot of press in recent years. It was first promoted by Savory in the 1980s as part of a more holistic approach to rangeland management. With mob grazing, a high density of animals is restricted to a small paddock, either eating or trampling all the plants before being moved to new grass – sometimes after a few hours. Stocking livestock at densities over 100,000 lbs/acre is common. Mob grazing usually starts later in the season (e.g., late May/June in Virginia) when grasses are near maturity and is followed by a long recovery period – usually 60-90 days before paddocks are grazed again. Paddocks under mob grazing should be used only once or twice per season usually. Rotational grazing is similar in principle to mob grazing except stocking density is lower and pasture 'recovery' periods are much shorter – e.g., 15-30 days. Continuous grazing is probably the most common type of management here in Virginia. It usually involves confinement of livestock within defined partitions of pastureland with minimal management of stocking rate or control of forage removal.



A major reason for initiating this project was to provide graziers with some comparative information about these different grazing methods. In particular, we wanted to provide more information about mob grazing and its apparent benefit to soils and plants since this method has drawn a lot of interest, and controversy, among livestock producers. Some of the purported benefits associated with mob grazing include:

1. Healthier soils with high organic matter, water-holding capacity, and an abundance of microorganisms, earthworms and dung beetles.
 2. More even distribution of recycled soil nutrients and organic matter across pastures from the intensive management of animal stocking density.
- Desirable plant diversity with few weeds and consistent seasonal ground cover that will help build organic matter and reduce soil erosion.



To demonstrate these claims, we began conducting grazing trials at two farms near Blacksburg and Steeles Tavern, Virginia. Grazing at both sites began in April 2013 and will continue through 2015. In the end, we hope to see how mob grazing measures up to both rotational and continuous grazing in terms of its potential to improve soil health, forage quality and reduce nutrient losses from water runoff. To meet these objectives, several Departments at Virginia Tech will be working together including: Departments of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences, Animal and Poultry Sciences and Biological Systems Engineering. We are excited about getting this project started so keep on the lookout for articles, pasture walks and workshops associated with this endeavor. It should be an interesting three years!

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2013 Field Day Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Research & Extension Center

David Fiske, Director of the Shenandoah Valley AREC, invites everyone interested in Forages and Forestry to the Center for their bi-annual field day on Wednesday, August 7, 2013 beginning at 12:00 p.m. The Centers Museum will be open as well, in the paragraphs below David shares a little of the history of the Center in addition to his invitation to visit and learn.



The Shenandoah Valley Research Station was officially opened in 1956 as a branch of the Virginia Agricultural Experiment Station of Virginia Tech. The 620-acre farm, known historically as “Walnut Grove Farm,” is the ancestral home of Robert McCormick and his son, Cyrus Hall McCormick. Born on this farm in 1809, Cyrus Hall McCormick is famous for building the first practical grain reaper, which was successfully demonstrated in a field of oats owned by John Steele in nearby Steele’s Tavern in 1831. Patented in 1834, the reaper is credited for starting the mechanical revolution in agriculture that would forever change agricultural production worldwide. From a meager beginning in a small blacksmith shop in Steeles Tavern evolved a company that would grow to become one of the world’s manufacturing giants, the International Harvester Company.



The descendents of Cyrus McCormick retained ownership of the farm until 1954 when they donated it to Virginia Tech. Soon after, a two-acre site including the gristmill, 1822 manor house, smoke-house, schoolroom, housekeeper’s quarters, and blacksmith shop were set aside as the McCormick Memorial Plot.

In 1956, the Cyrus McCormick exhibit from the Virginia State Museum in Richmond was relocated to the second floor of the blacksmith shop. Included in this display are 14 miniature models of the McCormick reaper that are similar to those used by McCormick salesmen in the late 1800s. In June 1966, the memorial area was designated a National Historic Landmark and Virginia Wayside site, and is toured by thousands of visitors every year.

Although the station officially opened in 1956, Virginia Tech’s first research project started in 1955. Drs. Charles Kincaid and Robert Carter conducted a crossbreeding project with British breeds of cattle. This project continued until 1978 and gained acclaim as the largest and most complete crossbreeding project in the United States involving British breeds of cattle at that time.

Over the past 50 years, many faculty, students, interns, employees, and visitors have passed through the center. From the early “mechanical” research in the 1800s to the present high-tech projects, the facility has played an important role in developing new and innovative ideas for production agriculture. The center also continues to tell the story of the resourceful McCormick family and the impact they had on the world



During the August Field Day, researchers will be on-hand to review and discuss their on-going research projects being conducted at the Shenandoah Valley AREC. This is going to be an excellent educational program, especially for producers interested in livestock, forage production, grazing, and Silvopasture management. Virginia’s Commissioner of Agriculture, Matt Lohr will be the featured speaker before dinner. We are asking persons interested in attending the Field Day to contact the Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Research and Extension Center at (540) 377-2255 on or before **Friday, August 2nd, 2013** to sign-up to help facilitate meal arrangements.

Nutrient Dynamics in Cool-Season Pasture: Measuring Changes Through Time

By: Gordon Jones and Ben Tracy, Department of Crop & Soil Environmental Sciences, Virginia Tech

One of the purported benefits of raising livestock on pasture is efficient nutrient cycling. Compared to grain production and confined feeding, pasture-based livestock operations often have low requirements for imported feed or fertilizer, and well-managed perennial pastures should experience only small nutrient losses. While these concepts are well known, there has been little study of the actual change in soil nutrient concentrations in tall fescue-based pasture under rotational stocking management.

A cow-calf grazing experiment began at the Shenandoah Valley Agricultural Research and Extension Center in Steele’s Tavern, VA in 2008. Groups of large and small-framed cows were rotationally-stocked in two different types of creep grazing system. There were three replications of each of the four animal size and creep grazing combinations—a total of 96 paddocks, about 2 acres each. Seven or eight cow-calf pairs were stocked in each grazing system at a rate of approximately 2 acres per pair. The pasture was tall fescue, bluegrass, orchardgrass, and white clover previously established on Frederick and Christian silt loams. Soil pH, phosphorus, and potassium were corrected to soil test recommendations prior to grazing, but no fertilizer was added between 2008 and 2012. Soil from each paddock was sampled each November and analyzed by routine soil test at Virginia Tech. Forage was harvested from each paddock once per month from April through October and analyzed for its mineral composition.

Through five years of rotational stocking, soil pH declined by 0.04 – 0.06 pH units per year, which is a very small decrease. Soil phosphorus declined by 1.9 – 3.2 lbs per acre per year and potassium concentrations did not change with time through this study. Given these trends, it could take 8 – 13 years before pH or phosphorus concentration of these soils would decline to a level negatively affecting pasture productivity. Neither cow frame score nor type of creep grazing had an effect on changes in soil nutrient concentration. The soil from paddocks in which hay was fed showed increased concentrations of phosphorus and potassium. Forage analysis showed that pasture provided sufficient concentrations of macronutrients—nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium and sulfur—to meet the requirements of dry beef cows throughout the growing season, but it only met the higher nutritional requirements of lactating beef cows in early spring.

Page 8 Nutrients



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Pastoral - adjective - having the simplicity, charm, serenity, or other characteristics generally attributed to rural areas.

That about sums it up. It's sort of a sentimental take on the monotony, the tedium, the drudgery and the mind-numbing routines that all of us in production agriculture must confront on a daily basis. Because all farmers do is sit around in their air-conditioned cabs and go from one end of the field to the other. Of course there are those few and fleeting moments which help to dispel the boredom. Like running a mummified deer carcass through your discbine. Or finding the broken off t-post with not one, but two trailer tires. Or standing in awe at the power of a round bale as it rolls down the hill, through the fence, and into the road. Or when your neighbors Longhorn-Highland bull decides to visit your heifers. I'm not sure who comes up with these stereotypes, but I guarantee it wasn't anyone who has anything to do with production agriculture. There doesn't seem to be any end to the misconceptions about who we are and what we do. No other industry in the world has so many so-called experts providing so much over-site - legislators, consumers, foreign trade organizations, food safety professionals, animal rights advocates whose opinions and actions are based on an odd combination of reality and garbage tempered with sentimentality and nostalgia.

Like it or not, this is our operating environment - the cultural, political, economic, global and natural forces that impact every decision we make and everything we do. It's an environment that can be impacted by a flu outbreak in China, marmorated stink bugs, or a video of an employee with a down cow and a front-end loader.

The members of the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council know that the only way to be successful in this environment is to control what we can, and to react to what we have to. That means being aware of what is going on, and why. It means knowing when to watch and listen. And it means knowing when to speak up and act.

It means being aware that we really are responsible for the health and well-being of the seven billion people who use the food, fuel and fiber we produce.

And that we're humbled and honored to accept that responsibility.

Best Regards,
Patty Jonson
President, VFGC

School from front Page

Course evaluations confirmed that the information conveyed in the training was very practical and the participants unanimously stated they plan to use the knowledge learned and the basic skills developed at this beginner school to improve the level of grazing management on their own farm. Each producer evaluation stated that the practical nature of the course content was well worth the \$50 registration fee and the time away from the farm. Participants highly recommend this course in the future for other producers with less than 10 years grazing experience.

This pilot program was a true partnership effort involving VFGC producer board members, VA Tech Extension Specialists, VCE agents, NRCS Grazing Specialists, and veteran graziers participating as speakers and trainers on various parts of the program. The participants had the opportunity to get to know the 9 trainers and network with 30 other forage and livestock producers with a similar level of experience and future grazing goals.

This pilot school for beginning grazers met its initial goal, and the outlook is bright for these 30 grazers to ap-

ply what they learned to the 3,700 acres of grassland they collectively manage. The true success of this educational effort is attributed to the dedicated VFGC Board members, committed producer members, and its partnerships with Va Tech, Cooperative Extension and NRCS. It is also important to recognize that VFGC greatly appreciates the partnership with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation on educational opportunities like this, and it would not be possible without the supportive grant funding to make the registration affordable for producers.

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Water Quality Tool

USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service has developed a new web-based tool to help producers easily calculate the quality of water flowing off their fields.

It’s called the Water Quality Index for Agricultural Runoff, or WQIag for short, and this is how it works: Producers input variables about their field, such as slope, soil characteristics, nutrient and pest management, tillage practices, and, finally, conservation practices.

Then, as NRCS National Water Quality and Quantity team leader Shaun McKinney explains, “The WQIag takes the complex scientific information of these variables and synthesizes them into a single number.”

Though some variables – such as slope and soil – won’t change, producers can adjust others for a quick estimate of how conservation impacts water quality. A few clicks calculate the consequences, in terms of water quality, of using less tillage, less fertilizer, natural pest management techniques and other conservation practices.

“Water quality is complex,” says McKinney. In the past, “experts have usually focused on one aspect of water quality – such as temperature, nutrients or pesticide content –instead of thinking about a more complete picture.”

When experts do talk about the complete picture, their common vocabulary is math and science. It’s not always easy to get producers on board with improving water quality, in part because conversations on this topic often quickly become highly technical, leaving most non-scientists behind.

“This is a problem,” McKinney says. “How can we talk to producers about improving water quality, when we can’t explain it in a clear way?”

The Water Quality Index for Agricultural Runoff addresses this problem with two features that set it apart from previous measures of water quality: simplicity and accessibility. First, the WQIag simplifies the result into a 10-point rating everyone can understand; second, it’s available to anyone with an internet connection.



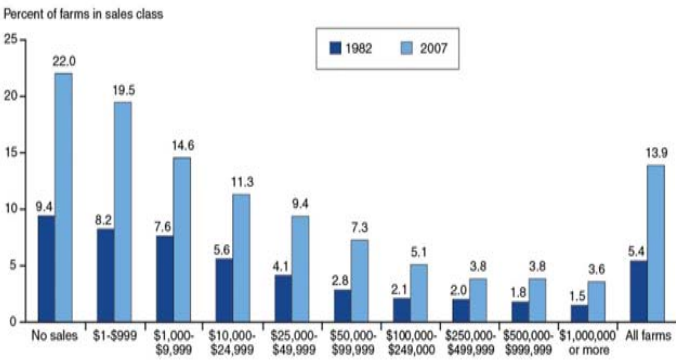
Before the WQIag, there was no simple way to rate water quality. Experts installed monitoring stations that tested water as it flowed off fields. These stations provide actual measurements, but they’re expensive and interpreting the measurements requires a scientific background.

“Our solution was inspired by the Dow Jones Index[es],” says team member and Environmental Engineer Harbans Lal, referring to the well-known system that tracks investments like mutual funds and stocks. “We wanted to represent something very complex with a single, easy-to-understand number.”

“The WQIag is still in the pilot phase, but we’re getting a lot of useful feedback. We’re using that feedback to fine tune the software and make it even better,” says Lal. “We hope to eventually offer the WQIag as a free smartphone app.”

Women in Ag Page 4

Share of farms and ranches operated by women in each sales class, 1982 and 2007
Women operators increased their share of farms and ranches in all sales classes



- **Women-operated farms specializing in poultry, specialty crops, grains, or dairy had the most sales.** Although these farms totaled only 21 percent of women-operated farms, they generated 72 percent of sales from all women’s farms.
- **Counting secondary operators increases the number of women farmers to 1 million.** In addition to the principal operator, many farms have one or more secondary operators involved in daily decisions for the farm. When all women operators, principal and secondary, were tallied for the 2007 census, about 1 million were counted as farmers—up from the 306,200 principal operators and totaling 30 percent of all U.S. farmers. Most secondary women farm operators (96 percent) were on farms whose principal operator was a man, generally the woman’s husband.

How Was the Study Conducted?

Using data from the Census of Agriculture, the authors tracked long-term trends for women farm operators and their farms from 1978 (or from 1982 for data items not available from the 1978 census) through 2007, the most recent year available. To examine current characteristics of women-operated farms, the authors used data from the 2007 census. The other major data source for the analysis was the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS), an annual USDA survey jointly conducted by the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS) and the Economic Research Service (ERS). The ARMS provides information not included in the Census of Agriculture about farm finances and the operator’s household income and educational attainment.



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VIRGINIA FORAGER

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Volume 34 Number 3

Summer 2013

Beginning Grazier School was Well Received by Participants!

The VFGC Beginning Grazier School held on April 22nd and 23rd was the first of its kind and proved to be very beneficial by those who attended. This educational opportunity was targeted for beginner graziers with the hope of having at least 15 producer participants register and attend. Producer interest was better than expected and registration was maxed-out at 30 paid participants! Attendees traveled from throughout VA as far away as the eastern shore with at least one participant from WV and PA.

The goal was to provide an intensive, 2-day training to expand the basic knowledge and understanding of the many integral parts of the forage and livestock system and how it can be managed to enhance pasture soil health and overall pasture production in an economically sustainable manner. This training was based at Lucky Charms Farm in Weyers Cave, VA, with host and experienced grazer Bud Shaver providing a practical learning environment for both classroom and hands-on field exercises. The content of the training included basic information on pasture soils, fertility, forage species, grazing management, weed identification, watering and fencing, grazing economics, forage quality,



Participants set up temporary fencing for a 24-hour forage allocation for a group of steers.

and livestock needs with field exercises reinforcing pasture allocation and the process behind grazing system layout.

Page 2 School

2013 VFGC Advanced Grazing School

The 2013 Virginia Forage and Grassland Council's Advanced Grazing School will be held at three locations across Virginia. On July 22 Clermont Farm Upperville, Virginia; July 23-24 Shenandoah Valley AREC, McCormick Farm; and July 25 Southern Piedmont AREC, Blackstone, Virginia. This school is hosted by Virginia Forage and Grassland Council, Virginia Co-operative Extension, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Turn to page six (6) for the registration form or go to www.vaforges.org for more information and directions to each location. Space is limited to 25, register by sending in the registration form and check to VFGC, 3599 Indian Oak Road, Crewe, VA 23930. Registration will not be taken by phone or email.

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Jim Gerrish of American GrazingLands Services LLC an internationally known expert on forage-livestock systems. He has 20 years of systems research and outreach while on the faculty of the University of Missouri, as well as 20 years of commercial cattle and sheep production on their family farm in northern Missouri. The University of Missouri - Forage Systems Research Center rose to national prominence as a result of his research leadership. His research encompassed many aspects of plant-soil-animal interactions and provides foundation for

many of the basic principles of Management Intensive Grazing. It is a pleasure to welcome Mr. Gerrish back to Virginia.

Reporting the progress of Virginia's forage industry