

2017 American Forage and Grassland Council / Virginia Forage and Grassland Council Awards



The Penn State team won 1st place in the National Forage Bowl Competition at the 2017 American Forage and Grassland Council conference held in Roanoke January 23-25, 2017.



Virginia's very own Robert Shoemaker officially received the gavel as the incoming President of the American Forage and Grassland Council for 2017 from the out going AFGC president Chris Agee.



Dr. Steve Washburn, of NC State, is presented the Distinguished Grasslander Award by Dr. Matt Pohr of NC State. The **Distinguished Grasslander Award** is presented to individuals who have served the forage and grassland segment of agriculture with distinction. Recipients have spent a career working with forages.



Alex Teutsch placed second in the youth essay contest for kids 14-18 years old.

Sam Teutsch won the hay judging contest edging out a dairy scientist from NC with more than 40 years of experience in forages and livestock.

Collin Teutsch placed 3rd in the youth essay contest for kids under 14 years old.



Dr. A. Ozzie Abaye, better known to Virginians as "Dr. Ozzie", was the well deserved recipient of the **Allen Award of Illumination**. This award recognizes individuals who have illuminated in others a passion for grazing lands and grazing animals and an appreciation of their essential role in human existence. It is given to those who inspire others to achieve a greater depth of understanding of grazing lands and to recognize that such understanding comes through teamwork and collaboration across multiple disciplines. Dr. Ozzie is surrounded by just a few of her past students who are active professionals in the forage industry that she has mentored and inspired over the years.



Jerry Swisher, shown here with some of his colleagues, was presented the AFGC Merit Award. The **Merit Award** was presented to Jerry for his superior contributions to forage and grassland agriculture. He has earned this recognition for his continuous work and productivity in forage and grassland agriculture in research, teaching, demonstration, Extension, production, and forage industrial development. Congratulations Jerry on this well deserved recognition.

Virginia Forage and Grassland Council Receives AFGC President's Award

At the most recent annual meeting of the American Forage and Grassland Council, VFGC was awarded the President's Award as the Top State Affiliate Forage Council for 2017. VFGC is one of twenty two Affiliate Councils across the United States.

President Chris Agee recognized VFGC for all the activities and educational events that were implemented over the past year by the Virginia Council. Activities of note included the Winter Forage Conferences, Grazing Schools, Fencing Schools, Equine Conferences, Field Days, Conservation Initiative Grants, Web Site, Newsletter, Scholarships, and Producer Awards.

The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council Board and membership are very appreciative of this recognition by AFGC. Accomplishments don't just happen and VFGC would like to thank any and all who have given their time, worked hard and helped in many ways, to assist and allow VFGC to put forth successful and useful events, that are made available to everyone across the Commonwealth of Virginia.



2017 VFGC Fencing Schools

Locations and Directions

March 22, 2017 – Patrick County – Dobyns Community Center, 1195 Rye Cove Creek Road, Stuart, VA 24171. **Directions:** From East or West of Stuart:Take 58 to Stuart, Take SECOND Stuart Exit (Patrick Henry Community College Exit), At end of ramp, turn south onto St Rd 1025-Woods Brothers Drive, Go through stop light at funeral home, Take 2nd hard top road on the right (Dobyns Rd), Take Dobyns Rd approx. 3 miles, Turn right onto Rye Cove Creek Road, Take Rye Cove Creek Road aprox 1.2 miles, Dobyns Community Center is on your left.

March 29, 2017 – Tazewell County – Thompson Valley Community Center, 8925 Thompson Valley Road, Tazewell, VA 24651. **Directions:** Take US Route 460 to Pisgah and turn in at the Crab Orchard Museum on to U.S. Route 19 Business. Continue for 1.8 miles to Route 16, at Frog Level, take a left on to Route 16 South 1.7 miles to Thompson Valley Market. Turn right on Route 604 and the Community Center is located on the right behind the Thompson Valley Fire Department.

April 5, 2017 – Clarke County - John H. Enders Vol Fire Department, 9 South Buckmarsh St. Berryville VA 22611. **Directions:** From Rt. 7 Harry Byrd Hwy, turn south on Rt. 340 N Buckmarsh St. The John H. Enders Vol Fire Department will be just past West Main Street on South Buckmarsh Street.

April 12, 2017 - Rockbridge County – Beck-n-Rich Farm, Richard & Becky Clemmer, 76 Pleasant Valley Rd. Raphine, VA 24472. **Directions:** From I-81, Take exit 200 and go east on Sterrett Road for 0.2 mi, Take US-11 N to Rt 797 (Pleasant Valley Rd.), turn left on Pleasant Valley Rd, dead-ends at shop.

Program Registration - REGISTRATION DEADLINE: Post Marked by MARCH 15th Please no phone calls to register.

Location attending (please check)

☐ March 22, 2017 – Patrick County ☐ March 29, 2017 – Tazewell County

☐ April 5, 2017 – Clarke County ☐ April 12, 2017 - Rockbridge County

Name _____ Name _____

Name _____ Name _____

Address _____
Street City State Zip

Daytime Phone _____ Email _____

Registration Fee: \$30.00 per attendee paid in advance includes lunch and all materials

Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____ Please make check payable to “VFGC”

Mail Check AND Completed Registration Form by March 15th to:
VFGC
Attention: Margaret Kenny
3599 Indian Oak Road
Crewe, VA 23930

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact David Fiske at (540) 377-2255 during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.

Upcoming Events

2017 Fencing Schools

March 22, 2017 Patrick County

Marc 29, 2017 Tazewell County

April 5, 2017 Clarke County

April 22, 2017 Rockbridge County

www.vaforages.org

2017 Grazing School

April 25&26, 2017

www.vaforages.org

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Harlan White Scholarship

By: Jon Repair
As most of you know the VFGC has established a Scholarship Fund in the memory of Dr. Harlan White, past Forage Extension Specialist at Va. Tech. Dr. White dedicated his life to Virginia's forage industry. In 1979 he was the driving force behind the formation of the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council which has grown to become a major voice for the forage and livestock industries in Virginia.
VFGC has established a permanent endowment to provide scholarships to support Virginia forage education and research. This endowment has grown through the generous donations of many, including friends of Dr. White, producers, professors and industry leaders.



Richard Ruff (left) presenting Jon Repair, president of the VFGC a check for the Harlan White Memorial Scholarship fund.

At the American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Meeting in January at Roanoke, Mr. Richard Ruff of Bedford County, who has been a continual supporter of this effort, stepped forward once again. Mr. Ruff, in his usual down to earth fashion, demonstrated his generosity towards the Scholarship Fund and respect for Dr. White. Richard presented to the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council a check for one thousand dollars for the Harlan White Scholarship Fund. In his remarks before the luncheon audience, he stated that he has been able to support the Scholarship Fund because of the monies he has saved from following the valued advice given to him by Dr. White over the years. As Richard stated, "the lessons learned from Dr. White have remained to be sound and productive, and had certainly passed the test of time".

VFGC thanks Mr. Ruff for his ongoing support of the Harlan White Scholarship Fund. Through his and the kind generosity of others we have been able to build the fund, while at the same time provide scholarships annually for deserving agricultural students.

Jon Repair president of the Virginia Forage and Grassland.

Wade S. Reiter Recognized

By: Jon Repair
The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council recognized Wade S. Reiter of Dinwiddie for his accomplishments in the area of forage production at the American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Conference held in Roanoke in January. VFGC highlighted Wade's selection in November as the National Forage Production Winner in the National FFA Agricultural Proficiency program. The award is based on Wade's Supervised Agricultural Experience working on his family's farm operation. His project involved growing, harvesting, and marketing approximately 70 acres of oat and grass hay each year as well as producing 1100 tons of corn silage for the beef cattle feedlot. Wade is involved in all aspects of the operation including equipment maintenance and operation, maturity evaluation for harvest, and of course physical labor handling bales.



Jon Repair, VFGC President, with Wade S. Reiter and Wade's parents, Naomi and Scott Reiter.

Wade S. Reiter is a Junior at Dinwiddie County High School. He currently serves as the Dinwiddie FFA Chapter President. He is also Past Chapter Treasurer and a member of the National Honor Society. Wade has received several awards including Star Chapter Greenhand and 1st Place State Winner in the Junior Agriculture Mechanics contest. He has competed in the State FFA Ag Sales Contest, State Environment Competition, and Youth Area Cattle Working Contest where his team placed 3rd. Wade has continued to show livestock at the Piedmont Area Junior Livestock Show for the past eight years.


All of us at the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council congratulate Wade S. Reiter for all his accomplishments.

Jon Repair is the president of the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council.

To JOIN the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council a membership form can be found on the web at <http://www.vaforages.org> or Contact Margaret Kenny at vfgcforages@gmail.com or call 434-645-9639

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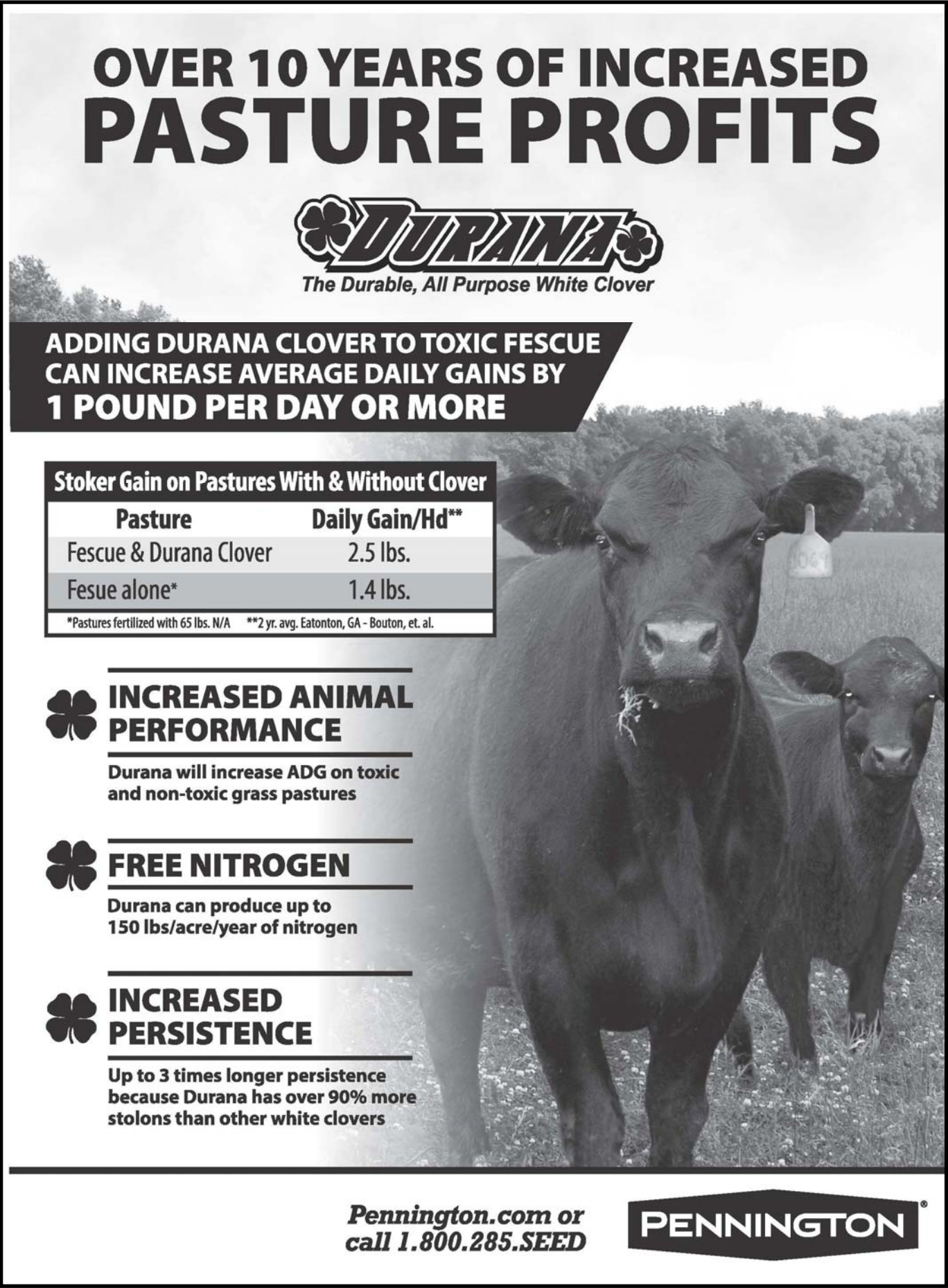


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- ◆ Matching forage quality & animal needs
- ◆ Creating a forage budget

You will have hands-on opportunities to work with grazing tools, try out fencing materials, and practice allocating pasture to livestock.

Finally, put it all together for your farm. The last day of the school features a workshop where you can sit down with our instructors to begin developing a custom grazing plan.

Questions about the school?

Matt Booher
Virginia Cooperative Extension
mrbooher@vt.edu
540-245-5750

J.B. Daniel
USDA-NRCS
j.b.daniel@va.usda.gov
434-392-4171 x115



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After April 10

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& course materials

Early registration must be received by April 10

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VFGC

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2017 Grazing School
Margaret Kenny
3599 Indian Oak Road
Crewe, VA 23930

Bedford Cattle Producer Wins VFGC Outstanding Forage Producer Award

By: Scott M. Baker
Keith Tuck, Owner of Tuck Farms in Moneta received the Outstanding Forage Producer Award from the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council during the American Forage and Grassland Conference recently held in Roanoke. This statewide award is presented to an exceptional producer who has implemented innovative forage and grazing management practices leading to enhanced production, forage quality, and profitability, better wildlife habitat, and improved soil conservation and water quality.

Tuck Farms is a commercial beef cow-calf operation owned and managed by Mr. Keith Tuck, with assistance from his wife and four children.

Prior to the conversion to managed grazing, Tuck's 100-cow herd had access to ponds and streams for water. Since his pastures were large, the areas furthest from the water weren't being grazed efficiently. And there were the water quality concerns of having his cattle drink from streams.



Keith Tuck is presented with the Virginia Outstanding Forage Producer Award from Jon Repair at the American Forage and Grassland Conference in Roanoke, January 23, 2017.

In 2011, Keith shifted the farm operation from a conventional hay-based operation to a system that relies primarily on rotational grazing and stockpiled fescue. These practices have allowed him to reduce hay feeding by 50% or more of what he did prior to rotational management, with great savings of labor and resources. His winter feeding period has been reduced from an average of 120 days to 60 days or less. In 2015, due to excellent management and favorable weather, he essentially grazed year round. Consequently, this has significantly reduced his cost of production and in turn, increased his farm income.

The fencing and water infrastructure required for rotational stocking have supported better grazing (and nutrient) distribution by the livestock. These improvements have been made possible through participation in USDA

and Soil and Water Conservation District Best Management Practices. These practices have allowed Tuck to exclude his livestock from 100% of surface water. The farm now has 14 permanent paddocks. To further protect water quality and enhance wildlife habitat, he planted 7.5 acres of trees in the riparian areas. Tuck has observed a sizable increase of wildlife on the farm that he attributes to protecting these riparian areas.

In 2016, Keith took a major step forward by discontinuing hay production and selling all hay equipment. He now sources what hay he needs locally.

Keith is a servant-leader in the Bedford agricultural community. He has served and continues to serve on many public and private sector boards that directly impact the industry of agriculture. In addition, Keith fosters youth development in agriculture by serving as an adult volunteer leader for the Bedford County 4-H Livestock Club and committee member for the Central Virginia 4-H and FFA Livestock Show.

Keith routinely shares his knowledge and experiences in forage management with others. He has spoken at Virginia Cooperative Extension educational programs; hosted pasture walks on his farm for the general public; and consulted with numerous individuals interested in improving their forage management skills.

In a 2013 Country Folks article, Tuck noted "I can't control what the cattle's going to get when I sell them," he said. "I can't control the cost of what I'm buying. But I can control what and how much I have to buy. Rotational grazing is simple. The key to it is management. You've got to look at yourself not as a cattle producer but a forage producer who markets through cattle. You're a grass farmer."

Scott Baker is an Extension Agent in Bedford County.



David Fiske (left) congratulating Jerry Swisher (right) on receiving the Merit Award by American Forage and Grassland Council.

President's Message



If you remember my message last April of 2016, I discussed challenges and what they mean and how we need to accept and confront such challenges in a positive way. So is the case with the VFGC Board and other members who stepped forward and accepted the challenge of hosting the 2017 American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Meeting. As the host we began planning this challenge two years ago, as we partnered with AFGC to hold this meeting in Roanoke. Held in January this year's meeting was a huge success. Attendance was the largest ever to attend this Annual Conference. We had over four hundred attendees for the three days.

We even pulled off the Farm Tour on Sunday that many thought was a long shot. We thank both Tommy Watson and Keith Tuck both of Bedford County, for opening their operations up for us to visit. The Watson's shared the challenges and successes they have witnessed with their grazing dairy. The Tuck's discussed their year around grazing strategies for their one hundred head beef cow calf operation. Everyone on the tour was extremely appreciative of both families' insight, experience, and willing-

ness to share their experiences and lessons learned. A huge thank you goes out to both the Watsons and the Tucks for their role in the overall success of this year's conference.

It goes without saying that a huge thank you goes out to all who attended, participated, and helped to pull this challenge off. The success of this huge challenge and undertaking is a true witness to the generosity and support of all. As you read through this newsletter, you will have an opportunity to read about other highlights from this year's event. VFGC as a group certainly met the challenge and can be proud of what we accomplished. CONGRATULATIONS!!!

This will be my last opportunity to communicate with you all as your President. My term as President will end with the March VFGC Board Meeting. I thank you all for your support of the programming efforts VFGC puts forth for your benefit. As a Forage Council we are second to none. This is due to the strong commitment of the Board and the entire membership. It has been a true honor and privilege to lead this organization for the past two years. I sincerely thank you all for making my job much easier. It has been a pleasure!!!

Until next time,

Jon Repair
President, VFGC

Honors from Front Page

Jerry Swisher was awarded the Merit Award by AFGC. The Merit Award is presented to individuals who have made superior contributions in some phase of forage and grassland agriculture. Recipients have earned recognition among their colleagues for work and productivity in forage or grassland agriculture in research, teaching, Extension, production, or industrial development.

Throughout Jerry's career with Extension and in the private sector, he has worked tirelessly to help educate and assist those in production agriculture to utilize and adopt new and enhanced production practices. His efforts have helped many to adopt concepts and established research based production practices that have been sound scientifically, production oriented, economical, and with a strong base and balance of commonsense and effectiveness.

Jerry began the concept of transitioning Conventional Dairies to Grazing Dairies in the early nineties here in Virginia. This concept was not initially well received from many of those in industry, education, research, and production. Jerry's educational and hands on efforts over the past twenty five years have resulted in approximately 20% of all dairies now in the state of Virginia converting to Grazing Based Dairies.

The Virginia Forage and Grassland Council congratulates both Dr. Ozzie Abaye and Mr. Jerry Swisher for their dedication and accomplishments in the areas of forages and the positive influence they have both had with all they work and come in contact with.



2017 AFGC Merit Award winner Jerry Swisher with his wife Donna .

HOT TOPICS

By: Dennis Jones

I was only able to attend one day (Tuesday) of the American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Meeting in Roanoke. One of the jobs I was tasked with was to take notes during the "Hot Topics" session held at the end of the day, a day that was filled with presentations from Producers, University's, and Industry representatives. The following, "Hot Topic's", came from a room filled with individuals from every part of the Forage World, there were student's, researchers, producers, government employees, and other interested individuals. Dr. Ray Smith moderated the session and did a great job of keeping participants on track, the session moved smoothly from topic to topic. Once Dr. Smith was able to get the first topic voiced, the group moved quickly through many topics. It was an amazing session, even as topics were discussed attendees were going to the internet and providing up to the minute information on that moments topic. I hope readers will get something positive out of my notes.

1. Glyphosate resistant Creeping Bent Grass
USDA is releasing developers of this seed of responsibility for any issues related to the grass becoming a weed in row crops and forage crops. Apparently resistance may spread to other varieties. Release of this variety of Bent Grass is a preferred grass on some golf courses. A session attendant stated it is a major invasive weed in western Oregon. The Ag. Market for Smooth Bent Grass is very small. After consulting Google it was determined that the comment period had ended and on 1/18/17 USDA moved the Grass to "non-regulated status".
2. EPA is reviewing registration of pyrethrum insecticides - this could result in restrictions on their use. The USDA comment period is still open and found on the EPA website. Dr. Smith commented that in his experience EPA was eager for input and comments from producers and others.
3. Genetic Research in Forages – A suggestion was made to include topic sessions at future AFGC Meetings. CRISPR – altering genes in a plant vs: inserting genes was of interest. CRISPR is not considered a GMO by USDA. Could lead to faster improvements since CRISPR does not have to go through the GMO approval process.
4. Participant suggested putting more emphasis on organic and alternate production methods and inputs to be better prepared as synthetic inputs are restricted by regulation, and/or consumer demand. Better to be proactive than to play catch-up.
5. National Forage Week 6/18-6/25 is an opportunity to communicate positive aspects of forages. AFGC asked participants to forward ideas to Gary Bates. One suggestion was to partner with other Ag organizations, many already have outreach programs, example given was AFB.
6. Green House Gas Emissions-How do Forages mediate greenhouse gas emissions? The Forage industry needs to get this message out to public/press. Suggested workshops for Forage Industry participants to learn how to approach the press and explain how forages can reduce GH gas emissions. AFGC could again provide leadership training.

7. Flood control is a little publicized benefit of Forages vs: many other production systems.
8. Suggested topic for future Meetings-Climate Change effects on Forages.
9. There is a lack of on farm data (quantifiable) for forages, particular to mob grazing. Researchers in the room acknowledged there was a need. Funding is an obstacle, but some researchers have worked with groups of landowners/producers, and other partners to fund and conduct on farm research. New Zealand example was brought up, they have a "check off" on their Ag products that fund many on farm research projects.
10. Focus on net profit per acre to determine what system works best in each environment. Need conference workshops, producer tract, and a long term emphasis over several meetings.
11. More practical research is needed, the example given was, how many additional grazing days result from shorter grazing and longer rest periods? The assumption is more days can be had. Data is needed to back up this assumption, today there is no quantifiable data available.
12. Global demand for Beef is projected to grow by 30% in the next 20 years. What is our role? How can forage producers help this to happen? One producer's suggestion was to have a long range business plan. Comment-will this 30% come from cleared rainforest, or from improving current forage systems? Conversion of cropland? Cattle sharing cropland, grazing cover crops?
13. A session participant stated, "The generation coming out of University Ag. Programs does not know anything about grazing. These graduates are concerned with genetics, feed additives etc. Companies/Farms find they need to teach University hires about grazing systems".
14. Producer to Extension Researchers- "we don't need more knowing, need more doing". Find and supply producers with simple measures that provide immediate results.
15. Would like to see more Equine sessions. A workshop is being planned for the 2018 meeting.
16. Cow Size-Genetics really do make difference, recognize and use to improve efficiency and profitability.
17. Irrigation in Forage systems. Is irrigation profitable in forage production? There is great interest in certain regions. A large data gap exist for irrigated forages.

Dennis Jones retired NRCS and serves on VFGC Board.

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American Forage and Grassland Council Honors Dr. Ozzie Abaye and Mr. Jerry Swisher

By: Jon Repair

Dr. Ozzie Abaye and Mr. Jerry Swisher were honored at the American Forage and Grassland Council Annual Meeting in January and held in Roanoke, VA. They both were selected by their peers as recipients of two very prestigious awards.



Dr. Ozzie Abaye (left) and Dr. Vivien Allen (right).

Professor Dr. Abaye is a member of the Department of Crop and Soil Environmental Sciences at Va. Tech. Affectionately known as Ozzie by friends and colleagues, Dr. Abaye was awarded the Allen Award of Illumination. Named for Dr. Vivian Allen, formerly of Va. Tech, the Allen Illumination Award recognizes individuals who have illuminated in others a passion for grazing lands and grazing animals and an appreciation of their essential role in human existence. It is given to those who inspire others to achieve a greater depth of understanding of grazing lands and to recognize that such understanding comes through teamwork and collaboration across multiple disciplines.

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Dr. Abaye has through her teaching efforts instilled in her students at Va. Tech an appreciation not only for forages and their entire role as a feedstuff for livestock, dairy and equine animals, but the benefit of forages for their overall environmental benefit when used as part of a farming enterprise. She works with both undergraduate and graduate students. Dr. Abaye is an inspiration to students in the classroom, in the field with demonstrations and research, and internationally with opportunities for student to visit other countries around the world. Ozzie has returned to her native country of Ethiopia to further enhance and help farmers there to better utilize forages in their production systems while also demonstrating how forages can improve their overall quality of life.

Dr. Abaye has also worked across Virginia with agricultural producers introducing new cropping practices and demonstrating how these practices can enhance existing production systems. She is recognized across the state by all as a true friend and a credible source of production research and its adoption into the agricultural production sector.

Mr. Jerry Swisher is retired from VA Cooperative Extension where he worked for over thirty years as an Area Dairy Extension Agent. Jerry continues to do consulting work with producers and the Virginia Department of Agriculture. Jerry also has a forage based commercial cow calf operation in Fairfield, VA.



Jon Repair (left) and Jerry Swisher (right)

Honors Page 2

Reporting the progress of Virginia's forage industry