



Gladwin County, MSU Extension
555 W. Cedar Ave.
Gladwin, MI 48624

Phone: 989-426-7741

Fax: 989-426-6781

Email: thurlowk@msu.edu

Volume 10, Issue 1

February 2021

Dear Great Lakes Grazer,

We made it through 2020, although we are definitely not the same as we were prior to 2020. I really believed that in March when I was sent home and told I could not work from my office that it would be a couple of weeks and things would go back to normal. I could not have been more wrong; it has almost been one complete year, and MSUE has not returned to anything resembling the first 22 years of my career.

We are making the best of it and will continue to do so. All programs are being planned virtually, except for some of the programs, like the Bull Breeding Soundness Clinics. There are several programs that are planned, so peruse the pages of this newsletter and please decide to attend some or all of them.

Let us do our best to make 2021 a great year; make it the year that you make changes for the better on your farm!

Sincerely,

Kable Thurlow

MSUE Beef & Grazing Educator



Great Lakes Grazing Newsletter

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

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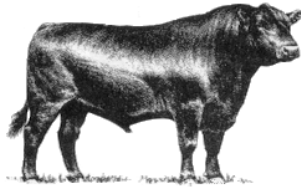
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2021 Michigan Bull Breeding Soundness Exam Clinics

The MSU Beef Extension Team will once again be organizing regional Bull Breeding Soundness Exam Clinics. By identifying potential male fertility problems, producers are able to reduce the risk of a less than optimum breeding season. The MSUE Beef Team encourages you to have BSE conducted on your breeding bulls every year. Contact your veterinarian or take advantage of the following Breeding Soundness Exam Clinics organized by MSUE. Cost is \$60-75 per bull when done at one of the MSUE clinics. (price is dependent on bull number/location) **To schedule an appointment at one of these BSE clinics, please call the appropriate contact person as soon as possible.** All Clinics start at 9:00 a.m. unless otherwise noted.

Location: Gary Voogt Farm 2831 Hayes St. Marne, MI
Date: Friday, March 12, 2021
Contact: Kevin Gould @ 616-443-2956 or Gary Voogt @ 616-862-4158
Dr. Jackie Ponstein West Michigan Vet Services 616-837-8151

Location: Wernette Cattle Company, 9144 50TH AVE, Remus MI
Date: Saturday, April 17, 2021
Contact: Kevin Gould @ 616-443-2956 or Dr. Kevin Todd 231-832-3680 Country Vet

Location: West Branch Stockyards, 1673 Fairview Road, West Branch, MI
Date: Saturday, April 24, 2021
Contact: Phil Durst @ 989-387-5346 Veterinarian: Dr. Bryce Slavik

Location: Stamper Farm, 10950 Bailey Drive, Harrison, MI 48625
Date: Saturday, May 1, 2021 9:00 a.m.
Contact: Kable Thurlow @ (989)802-3384 Veterinarian: Dr. Bryce Slavik

Location: Western Upper Peninsula
Date: Late April – Early May, 2021
Contact: Frank Wardynski @ 989-281-0918
or Dr. Renee Coyer, Upper Peninsula Vet Services @ 906-513-1356

Location: Eastern and Central Upper Peninsula
Date: By Appointment
Contact: Dr. Renee Coyer, Upper Peninsula Vet Services @ 906-513-1356

**The MSU College of Veterinary Medicine regularly schedules in house appointments for BSEs.
To schedule an appointment, contact the MSU CVM Large Animal Clinic at 517-353-9710.**

How forage diversity impacts grassfed beef

By Logan Thompson, PhD Candidate MSU Animal Science

Understanding the tradeoffs between diverse and simple forage mixtures is critical information for producers when deciding on a grazing mixture. Previous research has suggested that adoption of a diverse forage mixture improves the systems resilience in the face of severe weather events as the more species that are present, the increased likelihood that one or more species present will be able to tolerate a given environmental stressor. However, little is known about how diverse mixtures impact animal performance, important information for any producer, or how producer relevant forage mixtures perform over multiple grazing seasons.

This study examined how a diverse forage mixture impacted cattle performance, animal greenhouse gas emissions, and soil carbon and nitrogen stocks compared to a simple alfalfa orchardgrass mixture. The diverse mixture was seeded for a desired mixture of: 9% alfalfa, 10% orchardgrass, 12% red clover, 7% white clover, 29% birdsfoot trefoil, 12% forage chicory, 14% meadow fescue, and 7% timothy. We conducted this experiment over three grazing seasons from 2018 to 2020 using yearling Red Angus steers and heifers at the Lake City AgBioResearch Center. Animals were allocated ½ acre sub-paddocks for 8 animals and rotated every 1-3 days depending on forage availability and desired level of forage utilization.

We found that animals grazing the diverse forage mixture had the same performance of those on the alfalfa orchardgrass mixture, both treatments gaining ~2 lb/hd day each year and total animal gain over the grazing season varied only by the length of the grazing season. Both treatments produced similar levels of enteric methane indicating that there was no change in the amount of emissions per pound of gain. The diverse mixture also resulted in lower fiber content across and improved digestibility compared to the simple mixture. One common issue both mixtures presented was the need to reseed legumes. By the third year, both mixtures had shifted to predominantly grass species (60% of simple pastures vs. 50% for diverse pastures). Additionally, forage chicory displayed poor persistence under our rotational grazing system, decreasing from 51.89% of pastures in year 1 to 4.58% in year 3. For producers desiring to keep these forages in their pastures, they will need to reseed them every 3-5 years. Forage chicory also presented a unique management challenge by growing rapidly early during growing season (spring to early summer) and, if not grazed or clipped, can bolt, which was observed in 2018 when plants were 7 feet high. This can negatively impact forages lower in the canopy and lower overall pasture productivity, but is easily managed by rotating pastures faster early in the grazing season. Birdsfoot trefoil did not establish as desired in the diverse mixture with a peak concentration of 3% in 2018.

We measured soil C and N stocks and found that the plant available carbon and nitrogen pools, the pool most sensitive to short-term changes in management, increased each year of the trial. This pool is used to examine the quality of soil nutrients (are the nutrients present actually available to plants/soil microbes), and the results here would indicate that these mixtures helped to improve the quality of the soil nutrients and may help the long-term productivity of these

pastures. This experiment shows that for producers in Michigan, adoption of diverse forage mixtures to capture the ecosystem services and improved resilience that they offer, will not result in producers losing animal performance or increase the carbon footprint of their operation. However, legumes and forage chicory will need to be reseeded every 3 to 5 years if producers want to keep them in the mixture as both mixtures were predominately grasses by year 3.

This research project was made possible by funding from the Michigan Alliance for Animal Agriculture (M-AAA-18-027).

M-AAA is a partnership among Michigan animal agriculture industries, Michigan State University (MSU) College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, MSU College of Veterinary Medicine, MSU AgBioResearch and MSU Extension focused on the advancement of Michigan animal agriculture economy.

The MCA/MSU Bull Evaluation Program

is the region's premier central bull appraisal program and is a cooperative effort by the Michigan Cattlemen's

Association, Michigan State University

Extension, and Plank Farm. The program serves to promote performance-evaluation of beef cattle; provide a common environment for evaluating bulls for growth, breeding and structural soundness, and body composition; and aid beef producers in obtaining superior bulls evaluated for these traits. In early October, 100 Angus, Red Angus, Hereford, Charolais, Simmental and SimAngus bulls arrived at the station and they will be on test from Oct. 23rd to Feb 12th. The top bulls will be offered for sale on March 20, 2021. Sign up at **mibulls.com/reports** to follow test progress and receive important sale updates.



**2021 “Virtual” Great Lakes Forage & Grazing Conference
Webinar—Thursday, March 11, 2021
9:00 am—12 Noon EST**

**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Dennis Hancock, Center Director
U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center**

**Keynote Topics: “U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center: Focusing on Impact”;
“The Baleage Balance: Moisture, Fermentation, and Risks”**

Other speakers include: Dr. Kim Cassida, MSU; Phil Kaatz, MSUE; and forage producers Tom Cook, Mike Lauwers, Jerry Lindquist, and John Strieter

Other sessions topics are: Value-added Straw; Hot Air in Forages; MSU Forage Research Update; Dairy Grazing Industry Trends; Details for Forage Excellence; and Michigan Hay Supply Update

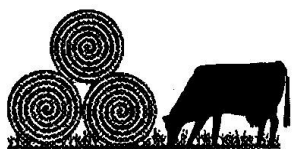
Registration required: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/2021GLFGC/>

Please view registration page for full details.

Cost: Free - no lunch included

Webinar link will be emailed following registration! Join via smartphone, computer or tablet.

Michigan Forage Council Annual Meeting begins at 1:00 pm at the same zoom link!



Michigan Forage Council

MICHIGAN STATE | **Extension**
UNIVERSITY

For more information please contact Tina at Lapeer MSU Extension at 810-667-0341

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The Return of Coronavirus Relief Programs for Agriculture

DATE & TIME:

Thursday, February 11
12:00pm—1:00pm

LOCATION:

Zoom

COST:

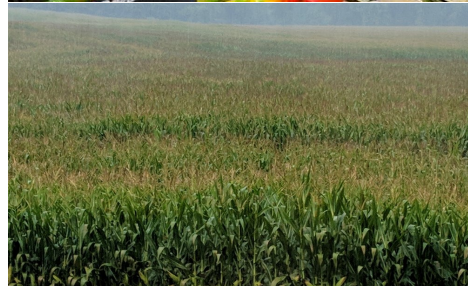
FREE

REGISTRATION:

Please register online

here. [https://
events.anr.msu.edu/
AGCORONAVIRUS0211
2021/](https://events.anr.msu.edu/AGCORONAVIRUS02112021/)

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WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

Producers of both traditional and non-traditional commodities. This would include crop and livestock producers, as well as specialty crop and greenhouse growers.

DESCRIPTION:

Recent coronavirus relief legislation enabled a number of programs to provide additional financial support to a wide range of agricultural businesses. In this webinar, we will walk through how these programs work, how they can benefit your business, and how to participate in them.

Topics will include: Payroll Protection Program, Employee Retention Credits, Economic Injury Disaster Loans, and other program updates.

SPEAKER:

Dr. Corey Clark, MSU Extension Farm Business Management Educator

CONTACTS:

Corey Clark, (517) 420-2042 or clarkcr@msu.edu
Stan Moore, (231) 350-0400 or moorest@msu.edu



Hay Production 101

**RUP & CCA
Credits
Available**

Description

This course is designed for participants to build a foundation of knowledge about growing hay. The course will cover a variety of topics, including the unique challenges of growing and managing hay in Michigan. Because of the systematic structure of the course and the importance of building foundational knowledge about hay, participants should attend all sessions. The MSU Extension teaching team is led by Forage Specialist Kim Cassida with other Specialists and Educators contributing.

Who Should Attend?

This virtual course is primarily aimed at first time and beginning hay growers, but anyone wanting to increase their knowledge of hay production is welcome.

Credits:

CEU and RUP credits are available for participants who attend live sessions. Credits are available only to Michigan residents. Participants must attend the live sessions for the entire time period to be awarded credit hours. Partial credit will not be awarded.

Program Dates and Topics:

- Tuesday, March 2 - Introduction, Economics & Marketing
- Thursday, March 4 - What to Grow: Species Varieties & Forage Quality
- Tuesday, March 9 - Fertility and Soil Management
- Thursday, March 11 - Establishment and Renovation
- Tuesday, March 16 - Pest Management: Weeds, Insects & Disease
- Thursday, March 18 - Harvest Management I: Timing the Harvest & Getting Hay Dry
- Tuesday, March 23 - Harvest Management II: Baling, Post-Harvest Processing & Storage
- Thursday, March 25 - Baleage

When and Where?

The course will be taught through Zoom. Classes will take place Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7-8:30 p.m. EST.

How Much?

The course is \$85. Participants are encouraged to attend all sessions. Sessions will be recorded for use by registered participants.