



# Great Lakes Grazing Newsletter

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

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**February 2022**

Dear Great Lakes Grazier,

While the MCA-MSU Bull Evaluation is proceeding as scheduled in 2022, the committee has started discussing options for the future of the program. New management needs to be recruited and facility options need to be weighed. Potential facility options include continuing in the program's current location, moving the program to a different location, or other opportunities not yet identified. The committee welcomes comments, recommendations, and interest from stakeholders as decisions will need to be made soon for next year's program. Suggestions can be submitted by calling George Quackenbush, MCA Executive Vice-President at 517-347-8117 or by email to [info@micattlemen.org](mailto:info@micattlemen.org). All input will be offered for the program committee's consideration.

I also want to let you know about an Advanced Grazing School February 24, and 25, 2022, at Waishkey Bay Farm in Brimley, MI. Why February because it gives you time to implement changes for the 2022 grazing season. This workshop is for graziers that have multiple years of experience, use a system of rotational grazing, and want to further enhance the outcomes of their grazing efforts. The emphasis of this workshop will not be on the right thing to do, but on ideas and information a producer can use to further their grazing program.

Please see the flyer in this newsletter for more information.

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Sincerely,

Kable Thurlow  
 MSUE Beef & Grazing Educator

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# Advanced Grazing School

**February 24-25, 2022**

**Waishkey Bay Farm  
10135 W. Mills Rd.  
Brimley, MI 49715**

To Register:

[https://events.anr.msu.edu/  
advancedgrazingschool2022/](https://events.anr.msu.edu/advancedgrazingschool2022/)

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This advanced grazing workshop is for those people who have multiple years of grazing experience, use some system of “rotational grazing”, and want to further enhance the outcomes of their grazing efforts. The emphasis of this workshop will not be on what is the “right” thing to do, but on what ideas and information a producer can use to further their grazing program. Therefore, it will be critical for each person to be prepared to look at their own operations and be ready to write a work plan for the next year and the next 5 years. Each person will be expected to share some of their ideas and participate in the discussion.

Renowned grazing expert, Ben Bartlett will be the featured presenter. MSU Extension Educators, Kable Thurlow and Frank Wardynski are organizing the activities and will share in teaching and leading group discussion. Also, MSU Extension Specialists Jason Rowntree and Paul Gross, Extension Educator will give presentations.

The cost will be \$150 if signed up by February 20, 2022. Group discounts will be given to farms bringing more than one participant, cost for group participation is \$130 Registration deadline is February 20, 2022. Registration includes lunch on both days and materials. This event qualifies for MAEAP Phase 1 credit

We will not be able to accept walk-ins.

**Overnight accommodations:**

Hotels in Brimley:

Bay Mills, 1-888-422-9645

Willabee’s Motel, 906-248-3090

Sault Ste. Marie Hotels are about 15 miles away with about nine options

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By Ryan D. Rhoades  
Associate Professor-Extension Beef Specialist  
Department of Animal Sciences  
Colorado State University

### **Record Keeping is a Waste of Time**

Ever been told you must keep detailed set of records for the ranch to be successful as a manager? Ever considered you might be wasting a great deal of time? Hopefully that's not the case, but it is certainly possible to be 100% efficient but 0% effective. One example of this is record keeping on the ranch. Records in raw form are just data. Actual decision making requires information. Some level of analysis is therefore needed to transform raw records/data into information that can be used for decision making. If records are being kept to simply write data down and then place it on a shelf or in the back of a desk drawer, then precious time is likely being wasted. However, if records are being used to generate metrics that help plan production decisions, then record keeping is a valuable exercise. Good records should provide specific, timely, and actionable information for the operation to use. Ask the following prior to taking the time to record data. Is this data creating value? How much extra time is required to record the data? Can the data recording be simplified? Since data analysis is key to more effective record keeping and decision making, here are a couple of considerations to help improve your effectiveness.

**1) Apply the 80/20 rule to record keeping:** Meaning 20% of the work usually results in 80% of the results on the ranch. However, the problem with keeping records is usually 80% of our time is spent collecting the data and only 20% analyzing it. Record keeping is often a useful exercise when these percentages are turned around. Making this change would require setting aside time for strategic management or working on the business. Spending the right amount of time analyzing records could help identify those critical areas (i.e., production, financial, grazing, people) where management time should be focused to ultimately improve profits. It's not a new concept but one that deserves more attention. Few ranchers enjoy record keeping but that is likely a result of no perceived benefit in relation to time spent on the task. Regardless, managers need to develop a good system for allocating the appropriate amount of time collecting and then analyzing the data.

**2) Make a list of the records that will aid in planning:** It is commonly stated that the current financial situation (i.e., costs and cash flow) of the ranch is the greatest barrier to success. Ranch profitability is generally tied the big buckets of production, financials, grazing, and people. Make a list of the data currently being recorded on the ranch within each of these buckets. Determine which ones were used last year to help make a decision that impacted profitability. Perhaps consider simplifying data collection to only those that were used in decision making. Once key data have been determined, develop a management plan with a set goals for the ranch that can tracked and evaluated over time. Make sure goals are attainable for a balanced set of key performance measures (specific to your ranch). Consider using data analysis, experience, and research to identify goal targets. Then simply track actuals, compare projections, and adjust as the year progresses.

**3) Transform the data into useable information for the business:** A large percentage of producers (40-80% depending on individual performance measure) routinely collect performance and financial data (i.e., percent calf crop, weaning weight, pregnancy rate, feed

costs, cow inventory, etc.). However, it has also been estimated that over 75% of producers do not know their breakeven within \$0.10/lb., which suggests there is an opportunity to improve ranch record keeping and data management. It's not enough to just collect good data. Data should be transformed into management information or key performance indicators (i.e., ROA, Overhead Ratio, Grazing Days, etc.) that can be used to help make strategic decisions. Once data has been analyzed consider studying the results often and thinking through ways to better prepare the ranch to adjust or for uncontrollable events (i.e., drought, market volatility, etc.). The point is to work smarter not harder.



# Great Lakes Forage & Grazing Conference

**March 17, 2022  
9:00am to 3:30pm**

**AgroLiquid  
3055 W. M-21  
St. Johns, MI 48879  
(1.5 miles West of Old 27)**

**Registration Information:**

Michigan Forage Council  
members: \$45.00

Non-members: \$60.00

At the door registration  
**ADD \$10.00.**

(Lunch not guaranteed with  
late registration)

**Pre-registration deadline  
March 14, 2022**

(covers all sessions, lunch, and breaks)

Accommodations for persons with  
disabilities

Click on the link to register

[https://  
events.anr.msu.edu/2022GLFC/  
C/](https://events.anr.msu.edu/2022GLFC/)

*Join dairy, livestock, forage producers, graziers, custom forage harvesters, agribusinesses, MSU Extension Specialists and Educators for this annual conference and trade show.*

## Conference Agenda

**9:00 A.M. Registration & Tradeshow Opens**

**10:00 A.M. Welcome & Introductions,**

Gary Carmichael, Michigan Forage Council President

**10:10 A.M. Lessons Learned from 12 Years of Grazing Research in Michigan - With the Best Yet to Come!**

Dr. Jason Rowntree, MSU C.S. Mott Professor of Sustainable Agriculture

**10:50 A.M. Break**

**11:05 A.M. Focus Your Fertilizer Investment for Profitability in 2022**

Phil Kaatz, MSU Extension Forage & Field Crops Educator

**11:35 A.M. Renovation & modernization of livestock & forages at Rural Route 5 Farms**

Abby & Phil Smith, St. Johns, MI

**Noon Luncheon Break**

**12:30 P.M. MFC Business Meeting**

**1:15 P.M. MSU Forage Research Reports**

**For more information or help contact**

Lapeer MSU Extension

Phone: 810-667-0341 or [houset@msu.edu](mailto:houset@msu.edu)



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C/](https://events.anr.msu.edu/2022GLFG/C/)

## Breakout Sessions

Room A	Room B
<b>Feeding Low Lignin Alfalfa &amp; Plans for a New MSU Dairy Center</b>  Dr. Barry Bradford, MSU Clint Meadows Endowed Chair in Dairy Management	<b>Cover Crop Grazing Works !</b>  Dr. Kim Cassida, MSU Forage & Cover Crop Specialist
<b>Weed Control in Hayfields &amp; Pastures -Helping Ecology Work for You</b>  Dr. Erin Burns, MSU Weed Science Specialist	<b>Understanding Grass/Legume Mixes,</b>  Dr. Kim Cassida, MSU Forage & Cover Crop Specialist

## 2:15 to 2:45 Break

Room A	Room B
<b>Farmer Panel Discussion on Direct Marketing of Grassfed Beef</b>  Kyle Apsey <a href="https://apseyfarms.com/">https://apseyfarms.com/</a> John McLaughlin <a href="https://mclaughlinfarmltd.com/">https://mclaughlinfarmltd.com/</a> Jon Nelson <a href="https://jnelsonfarms.com/">https://jnelsonfarms.com/</a>	<b>Hay Making Equipment Innovations “How I Made My Equipment Better”</b>  John Russell - Pemberville, Ohio President of the National Hay Association

## 3:30 Adjourn

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