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**A voluntary
partnership
with private
landowners**

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GLCI News



Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle presents checks to the Southwest Badger RC&D for support of more grazing projects through cooperative efforts with GLCI and NRCS. From left, Secretary of Agriculture Rod Nilsestuen, Representative Phil Garthwaite, NRCS Conservationist Pat Murphy, Governor Jim Doyle, John Schindler (SW Badger Council Member), Angie Wright (SW Badger Admin. Coordinator), and Gene Schriefer (SW Badger Grazing Specialist).

Wisconsin GLCI Garner's Governor's Attention

The benefits of grazing are making headlines in Wisconsin – even with the state's governor. On Thursday, August 7 Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle visited the Kevin and Mary Jahnke farm near Lancaster to talk about the benefits of managed grazing. The Governor commended Southwest Badger RC&D for their efforts to provide education about managed grazing and technical assistance to farmers implementing grazing systems.

After speaking and touring the Jahnke farm, Governor Doyle presented Southwest Badger RC&D with a check for \$42,040 for the Council's Southwest Wisconsin Grazing Initiative – specifically aimed at helping provide technical assistance to producers through prescribed grazing plans – and a check for \$19,981 for educational tours and workshops on grass based agriculture in Crawford County.

The checks represent grants awarded through the Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) program, with a focus on grazing-based education, technical assistance, and research for dairy and livestock farmers.

Brian Pillsbury, the Wisconsin Grazing Lands Specialist with NRCS, reports that the Wisconsin Legislature, supported by the Governor, has funded \$400,000 per year for two years towards the state's GLCI Grant Program as a partnership with NRCS.

Editor's Note: There are many success stories with GLCI, and in this issue we are featuring news from several states about their activities to continue taking grazing management to producers on private lands.

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Northeast's GLCI Efforts Get Noticed

In mid-September, Lancaster Farming, a regional publication with circulation in Maryland, Delaware and Pennsylvania, produced a special "Foraging Around" insert that featured articles on grazing topics.

The front page article spotlighted Bill Poffenberger's experiences with Management Intensive Grazing for his beef operation. Poffenberger is also vice-chairman of the Maryland Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Coalition.

Another article inside the special publication featured the Maryland Grazers Network that has developed between Maryland NRCS, The Chesapeake Bay Foundation – the lead private citizen environmental partner in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service. The group aims to connect newer graziers with more experienced mentors while also relying on NRCS, Extension and environmental specialists to help make beneficial improvements on the land.

- Submitted by Elmer M. Dengler
NRCS Maryland State Grazing Specialist

Illinois finds success in summer grazing schools



Dr. Rebecca Atkinson, SIU, discussing the forage plots with Cliff Schuette, ILGLCI Chairman.

This summer the Illinois Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (ILGLCI) coordinated three Grazing Schools across the state, with attendance ranging from 13 to 31 producers at the schools.

The schools were provided to aid in producer education and grazing management techniques, and to help participants meet goals and ranking criteria for EQIP.

A producer panel in the classroom and an optional 'after school pasture walk' were two highlights of the school. The producer panel consisted of 2 to 4 producers with different livestock backgrounds/production. The pasture walk at SIU-Carbondale showcased research plots of grasses and annual forages with discussion lead by Dr. Rebecca Atkinson. In Henry County, the pasture walk was held on fields of a beef producer, and in Champaign County, the walk took place at a goat producer and ILGLCI committee member.

Cliff Schuette, ILGLCI Chairman, facilitated the school sessions and spoke to attendees about ILGLCI and the benefits of supporting the beef industry and securing federal cost-share dollars through programs such as EQIP and other programs to benefit the livestock industry. Those producers attending the Grazing School received a "Grazing in Illinois" manual and the "Illini Graze" computer program. The ILGLCI is planning more grazing schools in 2009.

- Submitted by Matt Bunger
NRCS Grasslands Specialist/ILGLCI Coordinator

Nebraska Introduces New Coalition Coordinator

The Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition has contracted with Tamara Beardsley-Choat to serve as their state coordinator. A native of Miles City, MT, Choat grew up on a fourth-generation family cow-calf ranch, and has previous experience in ag communications.

Jim Carr, a rancher from Burwell, NE, and chairman of the Nebraska Grazing Lands Coalition, said, "Tamara brings a strong background in organizational communications to this position, but she also has lifelong experience in ranching and a passion for promoting sustainable stewardship and our way of life."

Choat's primary duties will include developing a voluntary steward mentor program, implementing grazing lands workshops and tours across the state, and promoting public education and awareness of the value of Nebraska's grasslands. She can be contacted at 402-430-3656 or tamara@nebraskagrazinglands.org.

In other Nebraska news, the state coalition hosted a project tour Sept. 5 at the Reeves Ranch near St. Paul, NE. The event began with author Greg Judy of Clark, MO, sharing his experiences utilizing mob grazing and holistic management. Judy owns and leases 1,400 acres of land on 10 farms and grazes cow-calf pairs along with hair sheep, goats and Tamworth pigs. He is the author of the books *Comeback Farm* and *No Risk Ranching*.

After lunch, participants visited the ranch site for several demonstrations including working Border collie dogs; a discussion on prescribed burning; a review of effective rangeland monitoring; and evaluating various electrical fencing systems.

In a special presentation, Michelle Wendell of G.O.A.T.S. Inc., shared the grazing benefits of her 600 goats that were on-site to aid with weed control.

For more about the Nebraska coalition visit their site at www.nebraskagrazinglands.org.



Environmental Stewards Sought

Applications for the 2009 Environmental Stewardship Award are due on February 25, 2009. Now in its seventeenth year, the Environmental Stewardship Award has annually recognized the outstanding stewardship practices and conservation achievements of U.S. cattle producers from across the nation.

The Environmental Stewardship Award Program was established in 1991 by the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and is made possible by the generous sponsorship of Dow AgroSciences LLC and the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

For more information visit www.environmentalstewardship.org.

“MY PIECE OF TEXAS” THEME OF SPECIAL WORKSHOPS

Through a cooperative partnership of the Texas Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), more than 150 Texas landowners learned how to be better managers of their piece of Texas. A series of grazing workshops entitled, “Managing My Piece of Texas” were held across the state at four locations in September and October.

Attendees learned how to estimate forage production, determine grazeable acres, set proper stocking rates, and grazing management principles from conservation professionals and grazing specialists in classroom sessions and outdoor demonstrations.

Participants will also be given a copy of the soon-to-be published handbook, “My Piece of Texas: Managing Livestock Grazing to Meet Your Goals.” The handbook was developed by grazing specialists from the Texas GLCI, Texas AgriLife Extension Service and USDA-NRCS, as a result of a producer’s request three years ago to have a one-stop resource for grazing information.

Surveys taken after the morning sessions showed the workshop attendees averaged an increase of more than 40 percent in their grazing knowledge and management skills.

*- Submitted by Melissa Blair
NRCS Public Affairs Specialist, Corpus Christi, TX*

NEBRASKA, SOUTH DAKOTA TEAM UP TO TALK SUSTAINABILITY

“Alternatives for Sustainable Grasslands” was the theme of a joint meeting between the Nebraska and South Dakota sections of the Society for Range Management and the Nebraska and South Dakota Grassland Coalitions. About 100 people gathered in Valentine, NE, Oct. 6-8 for the event.

John Lentz, a district conservationist with the NRCS in South Dakota, opened the conference emphasizing the role properly managed grasslands can have in sustainability and the need to make more landowners aware of that. Lentz pointed out that currently, “Grassland conversion is being driven by commodity prices,” and he added, “It’s a wake up call for conservation. We need to continue to get the message out and look for new avenues for sustainability on grasslands.”

Three Nebraska producers shared their experiences with multi-species grazing – particularly cattle and goats. All shared that they’ve found value in adding productivity to their lands through this management tool.

South Dakota ranchers Jim Faulstich and Dan Rasmussen also spoke, and both emphasized setting goals and being willing to make changes on the ranch to add profitability and sustainability.

Rasmussen told producers, “Setting goals is critical. My goal is to keep pushing the envelope on improving my pastures and cattle.” On his family ranch, he has worked toward that by moving the calving season to May, purchasing hay instead of putting it up, utilizing goats for grazing, and most recently, moving to organic production to develop a niche for marketing his beef calves.

The conference concluded on Wednesday with a focus on tourism opportunities for rural entities. Members of the Northwest Nebraska High Country organization shared examples of how rural tourism is adding value to their ranch operations and is a viable option for helping sustain ranch life.

As well, a tour of the Berry Creek Ranch near Valentine showcased how cattle, horses and rural tourism are all part of the operations diversification and efforts toward sustainability.

NORTHWEST ILLINOIS GRAZING CONFERENCE IS DECEMBER 8

The Northwest Illinois Grazing Conference is planned for Monday, December 8, 2008, at Highland Community College, Freeport, IL. The conference will run from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Jim Gerrish, national known grazier and grazing specialist, will provide the keynote address on how grazing competes with high commodity and energy prices.

Dave Forgey, who grazes 250 dairy cows on 350 acres near Logansport, IN; and Alan Miller, University of Illinois Beef Cattle Specialist, who, along with family members, operates a 140 cow purebred Angus beef operation on 90 rotational grazed acres near Gridley, IL, are also on the program.

Conference topics to be covered include a virtual tour and discussion of each guest presenter’s farming operations, dollars and sense of feed resources, how to manage legumes and residual grazing heights, and lessons learned in grazing. The event also includes an exhibitor fair with numerous commercial and agency representatives sharing information about programs, products and services targeted to livestock graziers.

To register or for more information on the workshop, contact the Jo Daviess County Extension at 815-858-2273. On-line registration is also available at <http://jdc.extension.uiuc.edu>.

MORE UPCOMING GRAZING EVENTS

Dec. 5-6 -- 2008 Missouri Livestock Symposium, Kirksville. Details at missourilivestock.com, or call Bruce Lane at 660-665-9866.

Jan. 11-14, 2009 – American Farm Bureau Federation 90th Convention and Annual Meeting, San Antonio, TX

Jan. 21-22, 2009 – Heart of America Grazing Conference, Columbus, IN. Contact Jason Tower at 812-678-4427 or towerj@purdue.edu.

Jan. 28-31, 2009 – Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show, Phoenix, AZ

Feb. 8-12, 2009 – 62nd Annual Meeting of the Society for Range Management, Albuquerque, NM

June 21-23, 2009 -- American Forage & Grassland Council Annual Conference, Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, Grand Rapids, MI. Call 800-944-2342 or email info@afgc.org. Calendar

Submit your upcoming grazing events for the Sept./Oct. issue to office@gordonresources.com.

National GLCI Steering Committee Held Fall Business Meeting in Pennsylvania

The National GLCI Steering Committee held their annual fall business meeting Sept. 5-6 in Harrisburg, PA. An educational tour of three grazing dairies (see photo at right) was held on Friday, Sept. 5, with the business meeting held Sept. 6.

Much of the business meeting was spent discussing details for the Fourth National Conference on Grazing Lands to be held December 13-16, 2009 in Reno at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel & Casino.

The conference objective is "To Heighten Awareness of the Economic and Environmental Benefits of Grazing Lands," and its theme is "Grazing Lands – A Winning Hand."

A call for papers is being issued for the event, with more information available at www.glci.org. Letters are also being sent to state GLCI Chairs and state range and grassland specialists seeking recommendations for potential invited speakers. State GLCI Chairs will also be asked for a recommendation for potential sponsors or exhibitors at the 4NCGL Trade Show.

State GLCI Coalitions are also being asked to find funding to help speakers attend the conference in Dec. 2009, possibly through SARE grants.

In other business, Rod Baumberger reported on GLCI's strategic plan, which has a committee working to update the plan with emphasis on:

- Technical Assistance
- Technology and tools – ecological sites
- Research and Education – key conservation practices
- Support of State GLCI coalitions

The National Steering Committee will aim to have the new national GLCI strategic plan completed in time for their annual spring meeting in Washington, D.C. when visits are made to Congressional delegates.

The Spring GLCI Steering Committee meeting will be held Feb. 22-23 in D.C.

GLCI Steering Committee officers were elected for 2009 with Bob Drake, Chair; Howard Straub, Vice-Chair; and Rooter Brite as Secretary Treasurer.

The 2009 Fall Business Meeting will be held in Reno, NV; the 2010 meeting will be held in Louisiana, and Montana expressed interest in hosting the fall meeting in 2011.



To have your GLCI activities or upcoming events highlighted in this newsletter, contact Kindra Gordon at phone 605-722-7699 or kindras@gordonresources.com.

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Contact these affiliated organizations:

American Farm
Bureau Federation
(202) 484-3608

American Forage and
Grassland Council
(800) 944-2342

American Sheep
Industry
(303) 771-3500

Dairy Industry
(517) 323-6575

National Association of
Conservation Districts
(202) 547-6233

National Cattlemen's
Beef Association
(202) 347-0228

National Farmers Union
(202) 554-1600

Society for Range
Management
(303) 986-3309

Soil and Water
Conservation Society
(515) 289-2331, ext 13

Visit the GLCI homepage at <http://www.glci.org>

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