

Midwest Perennial Forage Working Group  
September 30, 2013

Present on call:

Bob Olson  
Cara Carper  
Joe Sellers  
Laura Paine  
Terry VanDerPol  
Jim Paulson  
Dick Cates  
Jane Jewett

The main discussion item was the presentation for the upcoming Green Lands Blue Waters conference.

We can give an update on the Contract Grazing fact sheets: where they have been distributed.

Laura has the notes from last year's conference sessions.

Discussion of the slides from Rick Cruse's plenary sessions at the GLBW 2012 Conference: one of the "Opportunities" slides relates to this Working Group:

- **Network producers – roving herds to graze cornstalks, rehabilitate land, manage public grazing lands, remove invasive species**
- **Demonstrate opportunities for young farmers**
- **Research and reach out to non-operating landowners**
- **Perennial forage in rotation boosts annual crop yields and reduces input costs**

This could be a good outline for the presentation. Share what's going on in the region in each of these areas:

Networking producers:

- In the Chippewa watershed, farmers and recreational landowners with a total of about 3000 acres are exploring collaborating on managed grazing: combining herds for greater impact in managing invasive species. Lots of public land; working on educating hunters about the benefits of cattle.
- Wisconsin's Grazing Broker project relates to networking of producers with landowners.

Demonstrate opportunities for young farmers:

- Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings courses
- Dairy Grazing apprenticeships in WI
- Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy & Livestock Farmers

- Iowa State U.'s "Greenhorn Grazing" courses

Non-operating landowners:

- Land Stewardship Project has started a couple of women landowners' groups, in the Chippewa (west central MN) and Root River (southeast MN) watersheds.
- Wisconsin's Grazing Broker project involves non-operating landowners

Rotations:

- Not a lot of traction yet. Land Stewardship Project sees this as a ways off.

Further discussion of presentation ideas. Bob suggested some bullet points supporting the beef and dairy industries:

- Lots of perennial cover is associated with the traditional dairy industry
- These industries provide the opportunity to have forage in the rotation; if livestock are present, it's possible to justify perennial forage
- Large-scale livestock production supports a lot of short-term perennial agriculture
- Ruminant livestock bring good things to the table in terms of GLBW goals
- No other CLC strategy involves livestock specifically.

Joan Stockinger will attend the GLBW conference on behalf of CDS and will talk about work with absentee landlords.

Suggestion to make the GLBW logo include cows.

The presentation could mention grazer networks. Wisconsin has about 20 grazing networks. Jane will check with Troy Salzer about Forage & Grassland Councils in MN. Joe Sellers should have some info from Iowa. Please send other ideas to Laura and Jane.

More things to mention:

- Wallace Center Grazing Project
- West Central Research & Outreach Center in Morris, MN has a NIFA project looking at species x grazing systems; summer slump issues; also on-farm research. Grazing outreach and field days are coming out of this research.
- Wisconsin has an annual grazing conference
- Both University of Wisconsin and Iowa State University likely have some grazing research projects going on. Dick Cates and Erin Silva can pull together the UW research info. Jim Paulson will send a summary of the WCROC research. Ask Joe Sellers for information about the ISU research. Laura will send a reminder message to these folks to ask for the information.

Suggested organization for introductory presentation:

- Livestock are critical: overview of acreage in pasture and hay
  - Research and Educational Activities
  - Other types of projects
  - MPFWG projects
- In general, emphasize the working lands aspect of perennial acres.

End of discussion about introductory presentation.

Moving on to Facilitated Discussion that will take place in the afternoon of Nov. 20:

Terry and Laura thought the session was too structured last year. Last year they tried to pull together three or four “Big Ideas” from the group for increasing pasture and hay acres; and also talked about challenges and opportunities: mainly challenges relating to economics.

Laura suggested using the time this year to solicit input from the group about the SARE R & E project. Could discuss other funding options in case the SARE R & E grant doesn't come through; work on refining ideas and gaining partners for the project. Bob noted that even though working with conventional agriculture has greater impact potential, the grazing and grass-fed topics are currently more fundable.

Two posters for the GLBW Conference poster session are proposed from this group: one about the Grazing Broker project, and the Contract Grazing Fact Sheets poster.