

Forum on Working Lands for Grazing, Forage, and Feed

On April 27, 2017, a day-long forum was held in Cottage Grove to bring farmers, agricultural and conservation organizations, and researchers together to discuss the potential for using perennials and cover crops for managed grazing, production of animal feed, and related uses such as animal bedding and heating of livestock and poultry barns.

Speakers included:

- Grant Breitreutz, Stoney Creek Farm: An award-winning family beef cattle operation near Redwood Falls with a rotational grazing program that incorporates cover crops to increase production and improve soil health, while reducing runoff and improving water quality.
- Kelly Anderson, Minnesota Department of Agriculture: Introduced the [Cropland Grazing Exchange](#), a new initiative to match up livestock farmers with crop farmers who have forage to harvest, and shared her experience with rotational grazing
- Joe Tomandl, Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program: The first formal apprenticeship for farming in the nation, DGA links current and aspiring dairy graziers – that is, farmers who employ managed grazing using perennial forages.
- Dean Thomas, Fillmore County SWCD: Discussed his extensive experience in working with landowners on use of cover crops as supplemental forage for grazing or harvest for forage.
- Alan Doering, Agricultural Utilization Research Institute: Presented an overview of biomass processing methods and applications that AURI is involved in.
- Gary Onan, professor of animal science at UW-River Falls: Presented his research into year-round feeding of beef cattle with high quality forage.
- Jared Goplen, University of MN Extension Educator: Presented his research on the economics of alfalfa and other hay crop production in Minnesota.

Small group discussions focused on the opportunities and challenges for the Working Lands initiative in two primary areas: 1) grazing and cover crops; and 2) biomass processing for feed, fuel, and bedding. Presentations from the forum and a summary of the small group discussions are available below.