

Indiana Forage Council, Inc.
2018 Activities Report
Keith D. Johnson, Secretary

The Indiana Forage Council had an active year in 2018. The first success stories of the year began at the American Forage and Grassland Conference in January. The Conference was held in Louisville, Kentucky. Jason Tower was awarded the Merit Award for the contributions made to the Indiana Forage Council and the American Forage and Grassland Council. Dave Fischer received third place in the Forage Spokesperson competition. Fischer Farms is a “farm to fork” choice for many restaurants. Four Purdue University undergraduate students represented the university at the conference’s Forage Bowl competition and received second place. The team was outfitted with Purdue apparel purchased for them by the Council.

The annual meeting of the Indiana Forage Council was held on February 19, 2018 in conjunction with a sponsored meal and seminar at the Brown County State Park located near Nashville. The seminar topics were “Adding Livestock to a Cover Crop Program” and “Role of Annual Ryegrass at Fischer Farms.” Josh Cox focused his presentation on the role cover crops play in his family's integrated crop and beef operation. He discussed how selection of different cover crops and the addition of grazing beef cattle on those acres have worked to improve the row crop acres and rest the perennial pastures. Dave Fischer shared the positive attributes of annual ryegrass and his management techniques to maximize the benefits to the operation and prevent it from becoming a management issue.

At the annual meeting and seminar, the Outstanding Forage Producer Award was presented to Clay Nuhring. Clay was recognized for continued utilization of quality forage systems in unique livestock grazing enterprise. Keith Johnson, Purdue University Forage Extension Specialist, and David Nuhring, owner of Grazing Systems Supply and a forage-beef producer were awarded the Maurice E. Heath Award. Keith was recognized for his service to Purdue Extension and the Indiana Forage Council. Dave Nuhring received the award for early vision and understanding the value of managed grazing, and for sharing that knowledge with producers.

A Livestock Promotion Grant was awarded to the Council by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture to conduct a summer forage tour. The August 27 tour’s theme was “Excellent Forage Management Makes a Difference.” The charter bus tour visited four forage-livestock farms. Education centered on Best Management Practices for cash crop hay production, rotational grazing beef cattle, pasture management for lactating dairy cows, and the production and utilization of high quality baleage in a conventional dairy.

Improvements continued to be made to the Indiana Forage Council website (indianaforage.org). A quarterly newsletter complete with a feature article about a forage-focused person, upcoming events and forage management tips for the quarter is being sent to the membership. Past newsletters are archived at the website. A Purdue University Agricultural Communication student was selected as an intern with the Council. As part of the class requirements and the internship, the student interviewed individuals and wrote feature articles about them, which are published in the Council’s quarterly newsletter.

Several of the 50 members of the council helped the Indiana Beef Cattle Association at the food tent the organization manages at the Indiana State Fair. This has been a successful venture as much networking occurs among those working the event.

The Indiana Forage Council is the planning and host organization for the multi-state “Heart of America Grazing Conference which will be hosted in January 2019 at Ferdinand, Indiana. The council received

a 2019 Livestock Promotion Grant from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture for this endeavor. Much time has been given to the planning of this major activity in 2018.

The Council looks forward to an active year in 2019.