

Graziers From Five States Heading To Columbia Jan. 7 - 8

COLUMBIA, MO.

A five-state "Heart of America" grazing conference returns to Missouri, Jan. 7-8, with grassland farmers expected from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and Kentucky, as well as the host state.

The conference, which rotates among sponsoring states, is gaining popularity, said Fred Martz, University of Missouri professor emeritus and member of the program committee.

Matt Boatright, deputy director of the Missouri Department of Agriculture, will open the conference with a look at "The Future of Grassland Agriculture." Boatright is a cattle grazer from Sedalia, Mo.

Next, Greg Judy, Clark, Mo., author of the book "No Risk Ranching," will speak on opportunities in grazing. He grazes livestock on land in the growing rural-urban fringe around Columbia.

Registration desk and exhibit area open at 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 7, at the Holiday Inn Select on I-70 Drive Southwest in Columbia. The opening banquet starts at 6 p.m. with talks to follow.

The grazing conference features broad topics followed by breakout sessions on production practices, Martz said.

In addition to Midwesterners, the program features two Westerners telling of rangeland ranching. Kit Pharo from Cheyenne Wells, Colo., will

talk on "From Production to Profit in Ranching." Bob Budd, executive director, Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust, Lander, Wyo., will tell of "Grazing for Ecological and Economic Sustainability."

Justin Sexton, University of Missouri Extension beef nutrition specialist, will tell how to use ethanol coproduct feeds for livestock on pasture. Sexton, who recently came to MU from the University of Illinois, was on the program committee last year. The 2007 meeting was in Mount Vernon, Ill., his home at that time.

Of growing interests to grassland farmers is the possibility of making ethanol from forage crops, Martz said. Steve Flick of Kingsville, Mo., will talk on "Future of Energy from Cellulosic Products."

Telling "Why We do What We Do" will be Allen and Tauna Powell, beef producers, Laclede, Mo.; Charles Fletcher, grassland dairy producer, Purdy, Mo.; and Greg Judy.

A complete program can be seen at <http://agebb.missouri.edu/mfgc/> by clicking on the "Heart of America 2008" link. Registration forms are there as well. The conference fee is \$70 per person attending two days.

For additional information call Missouri Forage and Grassland Council at 573-449-0886 weekday mornings.

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