

University of Illinois Extension Host Dudley Smith Farm Field Day

University of Illinois Extension Unit 18 hosted the Dudley Smith Farm Field Day on June 15, 2016 at the University of Illinois Dudley Smith Farm located just off Route 29 between Taylorville and Pana, IL. 50 producers attended the field day to learn more about the valuable cow-calf research and recently launched research projects taking place on the Dudley Smith Farm.

One featured speaker was Frank Ireland, University of Illinois Research Animal Scientist at Dixon Springs Agricultural Center. Ireland is conducting research on grazing tall fescue at Dixon Springs and how to manage fescue grasses in Illinois. He discussed research projects including Ky31 and Novel fescue and how they can be implemented in grazing programs. Ireland also covered the reproductive research being conducted at Dixon Springs and the effects of various grazing strategies on calf production.

The program also featured Ted Krauskopf, a beef producer from Highland Illinois using “high density grazing” practices on his farm. Krauskopf stated that he had seen a significant improvement in his grazing pastures and a lower cost of production using a high density approach in paddocks that have been underperforming. “High density grazing can protect the soil, improve nutrient exchange and reduce runoff”, asserted Krauskopf.

Dr. Neal Merchen, Associate Dean for Research/ U of I ACES Office of Research, discussed the importance of The Dudley Smith Farm. The farm creates a field of research to test new practices and technologies and is sustained by a gift provided by the Dudley Smith Family over 14 years ago. This support assures that research projects at the site can continue to move forward. Dr. Merchen, introduced Dr. Cameron Pittelkow and Dr. Laura Christianson from the Department of Crop Sciences and Dr. Rabin Bhattarai, Agriculture and Biological Engineering. These individuals will be working closely with Gary Letterly, Environmental and Energy Stewardship - U of I Extension on a recently funded Dudley Smith Initiative dealing with nutrient management, crop production and water quality. They will be researching what solutions can be developed to correct the “dead zone” problem in the Gulf of Mexico. They informed the audience that a portion of nitrogen and phosphorus used to produce crops in the Midwest finds its way to the Gulf of Mexico, and supports algae blooms that choke off oxygen in the water and make it difficult for marine life to survive.

An optional tour of the Dudley Smith Farm was available to participants. The tour included information about pasture-grazing and forage research taking place on the farm. Also, participants learned about the different types of grasses grown in the pastures. Lunch was provided by University Of Illinois Extension, Christian County.

Anyone interested in attending future events can contact Gary Letterly at the Christian County Extension office in Taylorville by calling 217-287-7246 or emailing letterly@illinois.edu.

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Photo Caption: Dr. Rabin Bhattarai, presenting information on the research that will soon be conducted at the farm.



Photo Caption: Ed Ballard, retired Extension animal systems educator, speaks of the different types of grasses grown in the grazing pasture.