



# Update from the 2024 American Forage and Grassland Council Meeting

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Early last month, Alabama hosted the American Forage and Grassland Council (AFGC; [www.afgc.org](http://www.afgc.org)) in Mobile for their annual conference. AFGC is a national group that includes researchers, faculty, extension agents, and producers from across the U.S. Topics of discussion revolve around grazing management, forage management, economics, and protection of natural resources. This meeting is one of my favorites to attend because I can learn cutting edge research, but also learn from the producers that are putting science into action on their farms. The Beef and Forage Group at Auburn University was well represented and included faculty members from Animal Sciences and Crop, Soil, Environmental Sciences, graduate students, and Animal Science-Forage Extension agents, many of which presented posters or presentations on the forage research and outreach programs currently being done in Alabama. Four Auburn University undergraduates also participated in the 2024 Forage Bowl Competition. While we did not win, the undergraduate students were able to interact and become friends with other students from across the country including Perdue, Wisconsin-River Falls, Kansas State, University of Tennessee, among others. Abbi Hines, Dr. Smith's PhD student, won the Emerging Scientist Poster Competition, and Mason Henson, PhD student with Dr. Dillard, won the Hay Judging Contest.

The keynote speaker this year was Carter Cattle Company,

LLC, owned and operated by Drs. Will and Monnie Carol Carter. The Carters discussed their diversified forage and cattle operation in Pintala and how their relationships with Extension, BCIA, and USDA NRCS have helped them over the years. As 2022 winners of the NCBA National Stewardship Award, Carters also spoke to the importance of protecting the surrounding environment and how that makes their cattle operation stronger.

There were several presentations that provided our team with invaluable information to better assist our producers.

Dr. Bronc Finch, University of Arkansas, discussed the use of liquid lime, ag lime, and pelletized lime for use in pasture systems. His study showed that when applied with a boom sprayer and adjusted for liming equivalents the liquid performed similarly to ag lime with similar input costs. During a different session, Dr. Jimmy Henning, University of Kentucky, presented a multi-state summary of baleage practices and quality, including 20+ samples that were collected from producers in Alabama. His work showed that even though Extension across the East recommend 55% moisture content is optimal, few baleage samples hit that mark. This results in poor fermentation which was supported by the finding that the average pH of baleage surveyed in the 4 cooperating states was between 5.2 and 5.4, well above the 4.5 - 5.0 pH recommendation in most states.





One the last day of the conference, ACES and ALFA teamed together to do a tour of producers and research in Southwest Alabama. The tour was well attended with participants from Michigan to Florida. The first stop of the day was at Kaiser Farm in Robertsedale. Greg Kaiser spoke to the farms diversified operations including bermudagrass and bahiagrass hay, beef cattle, and row crops. The second stop was at the Gulf Coast Research and Extension Center in Fairhope. Henry Jordan, Variety Trail Program Director, Jarrod Jones, Southern Regional Director Alabama Ag Experiment Station, and Dr. David Rusell, Extension Weed Specialist, spoke about the different research programs at the station. Tour attendees were able to see the annual ryegrass variety trail, and cover crop work at the station. As well as discuss, the cover crop management with cattle at the station and the overall forage program the station uses for their cattle. After a wonderful BBQ lunch, the tour headed to the last stop at Tucker Family Farm in Uriah. Mr. Tim Tucker, along with his sons Clay and Jake, provided a tour of their drone-planted cover crops in their cotton fields. As well, discussing how they rotate cattle through their grazed cover crop fields and maintain cattle during the summer on perennial pastures.

Overall, I would call the 2024 AFGC meeting in Mobile a success. This conference is open to any producers, and I encourage anyone interested to consider attending the next AFGC conference which will be hosted in Florida in Jan 2025. As always, please reach out to your local ACES Regional Extension Agent or email [forages@aces.edu](mailto:forages@aces.edu) with any of your forage related questions.



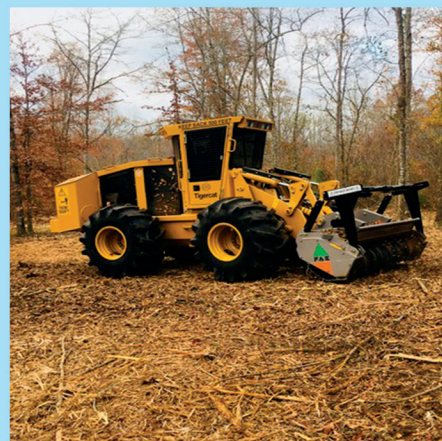
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