

WHAT IS THE AMERICAN FORAGE AND GRASSLAND COUNCIL?

Paul Meyer¹

I certainly appreciate the invitation to represent the American Forage and Grassland Council at the 27th California Alfalfa Symposium. It is always exciting to get together with friends and business associates to share information on making our livelihood more profitable.

The American Forage and Grassland Council was formed fifty four years ago as a means for extension personnel and industry representatives from various states that had their own forage and grassland councils to share information and lend support to one another. Today there twenty-six active affiliate councils, and we are continually encouraging more states to form their own forage councils and join AFGC. We also have a membership category for individuals that don't belong to a state forage council, but still want to be associated with AFGC.

Interest in forage-based agriculture is increasing rapidly around the country as a result of *Freedom to Farm*. We have had two new affiliate councils formed in the past year and several other states have shown interest. I am sure that many of the producers in the audience already know the value of the Queen of Forages (alfalfa) in their farming operations. The network that is formed by being involved in your state forage organization and affiliating on a national basis, is a valuable asset when it comes to dealing with various political and environmental issues. As our business continues to undergo rapid technological changes, an organization that is national in scope can help keep everyone abreast of those changes and keep us all on the cutting edge of our industry.

The Forage Leader is the official publication of the American Forage and Grassland Council. It is a tabloid-type magazine that is published four times each year. Volunteer editors have made this publication an excellent source of information for everyone involved in the forage industry. Our goal is to continue to improve this publication both in content and frequency of publication.

The American Forage and Grassland Council is governed by an eighteen member board of directors that meets twice each year. Six members represent the board from each sector (Public, Industry and Producer). The President is selected from each sector of membership on a three-year rotation.

I will be here for your entire meeting, and would be glad to answer any other questions that you may have regarding starting an affiliate council in California. I have copies of the last issue of *The Forage Leader* for you to take and enjoy.

¹ Hay Grower, West Point, Nebraska and Immediate Past President, American Forage and Grasslands Council.