



SFA FORAGE COUNCIL 2015 Winter Workshop Recap

The Crow Wing River Basin Forage Council hosted its annual Winter Meeting at Central Lakes College in Staples on Friday, February 20th, 2015.

Dr. Allen Williams was the keynote speaker. His presentation, "Gaining Vigor in our soils, pastures, crops, and livestock genetics" highlighted the soil health building practices he and others around the country are using to increase productivity and profitability. Through intensive rotational grazing, cover crops, and increasing crop diversity, producers are able to increase soil organic matter by two percent or more in just a few years. Improving soil health and organic matter builds resilience to drought and protects water quality. Dr. Williams also explained how genetics and herd management led to increased weight gains and carcass score leading to increased profits.

Local producer, Steve Flanagan, followed with "Lessons from the ground up, transforming depleted ground into a richer, viable grazing system". Flanagan's presentation explained his journey of raising kids and cows in a way that built not only healthy herds and healthy pastures, but a good lifestyle for his family. With his usual wit and humor, he gave a realistic picture of raising cows on pasture and how this lifestyle can help to instill a good work ethic in children and be profitable and rewarding.

The Crow Wing River Basin Forage Council is a collection of citizens working to promote vibrant, productive family farms, and enhance soil health, forage production and water quality within the context of the landscape.

The Winter Meeting was sponsored by the North Central Sustainable Research and Education Program, Cass and Crow Wing Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Unity Bank, Central Lakes College AgCentric, UMN Extension, Central Building Supply, Midwest Machinery, Leaf River Ag Services, Wadena State Bank, Happy Dancing Turtle, Olsons' Custom Farm Service, Professional Agronomy Services / Lacrosse Seed, and the Buckwheat Growers of Wadena.

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