

PARTNERSHIPS

NEW MEXICO HAY ASSOCIATION

Program is responsible for publication of market newsletters and planning the annual Southwest Hay & Forage Conference educational program. Aimed primarily at the state's premium alfalfa production, New Mexico's #1 cash crop.

AGENCY COLLABORATIONS

- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service and Los Lunas Plant Materials Center
 - Work with to promote research and education related to soil health and conservation in farming operations and native species selection.
- Farm Service/Risk Management Agencies
- IR-4 Project

INDUSTRY INTERACTIONS

- Corn & Sorghum Variety Testing
- Alfalfa Variety Testing
- Herbicide/Insecticide Product Research

UNIVERSITY/REGIONAL COLLABORATIONS

- Western Region Alfalfa & Forage Working Group
- State Extension Small Grain Specialists
- Western Society of Crop Science Leadership Committee
- State Extension Specialists and County Agents



EXTENSION AND RESEARCH PROGRAMMING

EDUCATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

- Grower/Commodity Conferences
- Regional/National Conferences
- Field Days and Workshops
- Farm Tours
- Alfalfa Hay Management
- Perennial Pasture Management
- Corn, Sorghum & Small Grains
- Water and Other Resource Use

APPLIED RESEARCH

- Alfalfa Production Systems
- Irrigated and Dryland Crops
- Irrigated Pastures
- Alternative Crops and Strategies
- New Technologies

PUBLIC OUTREACH

- Publications
- Radio and News Releases
- Website: forages.nmsu.edu

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COLLEGE OF
AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES



EXTENSION FORAGE PROGRAM

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE



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New Mexico State University
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FORAGES IN NEW MEXICO

Forage crops comprise the greatest amount of cropland acres in New Mexico, and their overall value in the state is second to none. Many species of forages are grown in the vastly diverse climates of New Mexico and are harvested in many forms to be used to feed a wide array of livestock.

New Mexico is home to over 1.3 million cattle and calves, 320,000 dairy cows, 90,000 sheep, 20,000 goats, and more than 75,000 horses. Forages constitute a large proportion of the livestock diet, and high-quality feed is necessary for meat and milk production and proper animal performance.

Water resources used for irrigation are declining in much of the Southwest. Many of New Mexico's forage production systems are not sustainable, and new, alternative crops and cropping systems must be developed to maximize water use in order for farmers to maintain a level of productivity necessary for continued feed, food, and energy supply.

New drought-tolerant alfalfa varieties and crop management schemes are being utilized at NMSU to improve water-use efficiency and extend water resources. In addition, sorghum is a water-conserving crop that has potential as an alternative to traditional corn grown for silage, and teff grass is a profitable water-saving hay crop. Extension and research programs involving alfalfa

hay and silage crop management, lowering inputs, marketing, and variety selection are necessary in all areas of NM so that continuous crop improvement information can be supplied to growers, beef operations, dairies, and horse owners.

FORAGE PRODUCTION

Over half a million acres of forage crops, including alfalfa, corn, sorghum, and small grains, are grown in New Mexico every year.

PROGRAM IMPACTS

Awareness of water conservation in New Mexico has increased as the landscape has changed to include more water-conserving forage crops (both silage and hay) and management. As a result, water consumption has potentially been reduced in these forage systems and profitability has been maintained or increased. If 10% of forage crops are conserved in the region, greater than \$35 million is conserved annually for the state of NM. If the livestock and their products that are dependent upon these crops are considered, then over \$200 million is preserved annually.

Sorghum grown for silage has increased 75% and statewide production has nearly doubled over the past 10 years from 210 to over 400 thousand tons. Other water-conserving forages, such as teff grass, are growing in popularity and are opening up new marketing opportunities for producers.

Research from this program has shown that inputs such as water, fertilizer, and seed can be reduced and alternative forages can be profitable and, in many cases, necessary in limited irrigated systems. Increase in grower awareness, understanding, and adoption is due to the Extension and research programs conducted throughout New Mexico by NMSU forage and livestock faculty and staff.

NEW MEXICO FORAGE FACTS

Alfalfa Hay

- 200,000 acres grown
- Over 1 million tons harvested
- Value: \$250 million per year

Other Hay

- 95,000 acres grown
- 200,000 tons harvested
- Value: \$30 million per year

Corn Silage

- 75,000 acres grown
- 2 million tons harvested
- Value: \$75 million per year

Sorghum Silage

- 35,000 acres grown
- Over 425,000 tons harvested
- Value: \$12 million per year

The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences is an engine for economic and community development in New Mexico, improving the lives of New Mexicans through academic, research, and extension programs. New Mexico State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer and educator. NMSU and the U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.