

*Grazing Field Day*

## It's been a year of growth for the Illinois Forage & Grassland Council

### Hosted or Co-Sponsored Events

- Three pasture walks
- Two grazing field days
- Illinois Forage Expo where 3 awards were presented
- Illinois Agricultural Legislative Day
- Illinois State Fair Ag Day Breakfast
- Farm Progress Show booth
- Two grazing schools
- Three online Grow & Graze webinars
- American Forage and Grassland Council national meeting in Florida in January

**Don't miss your opportunity to attend the American Forage & Grassland Council Annual Conference January 12 to 15 in Asheville, NC.**

### Messaging

- The IFGC website was redesigned
- The newsletter was transitioned to digital access
- We increased our posting to Facebook, including during National Forage Week
- We've updated our official email to [forage@illinoisforage.org](mailto:forage@illinoisforage.org)

### Partnership Growth

Our new partnership with the Illinois Grazing Lands Coalition resulted in the creation of The Hub. The Hub is a free, farmer-focused online platform is designed to help Illinois producers improve pasture management and grazing practices, regardless of experience level.

- Dozens of pages with resources, guides, organizations, and funding opportunities
- 30 Blogs
- 7 How-to videos
- Quarterly peer-to-peer online discussions with successful growers and graziers
- Up-to-date list of industry events across the Midwest.

### In this newsletter

IFGC Year in  
Review for 2025

Drought's Impact  
on Soil Testing

Illinois Winner at  
World Dairy Expo

Membership and  
Corporate Dues

2025-26 Winter  
Forage Events

Sponsors

## Drought's impact on soil testing

### Your soil health may not be what you think it is.

With most central, western, and northern Illinois counties in drought conditions, your soil test results may not be telling you what's really happening under ground.

Dry soils can affect soil test results causing inaccurate results and inaccurate fertility application.

"Low moisture means less microbial activity to recycle some of our macronutrients back into the soil and ties up soil macronutrients to the clay particles," says Chris Enroth, Illinois Extension horticulture educator.

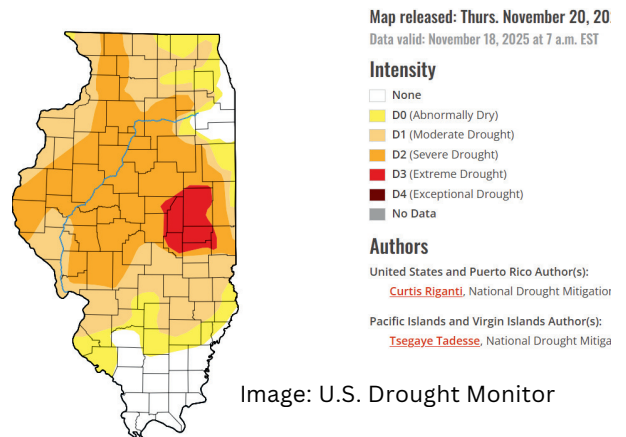
### Potential problems

Test levels for potassium (K) may appear lower than they actually are, according to Iowa State University Extension in its impact of drought conditions on test results report. In dry conditions, the soil moisture that helps release potassium is reduced.

"Soil pH values likely will be less than normal (more acidic) with drought, with differences ranging from 0.1 to 0.4 pH units being common," says Antonio Mallarino, professor emeritus with Iowa State University.

Soil test levels for phosphorus (P) may also be slightly lower than normal. "The effect of the dry soil on phosphorus levels isn't as dramatic as potassium, but less moisture in the soil may lower the soil test results," writes staff at *A&L Great Lakes Laboratories*. "The same situation of reduced crop yields may result in less phosphorus being removed from the soil."

To further complicate soil testing, dry ground makes it difficult to reach the 6- to 9-inch depth to draw your soil core. The sample may break apart making it difficult to see the nutrient stratification.



"Field fires, low grain moisture, and tillage practices are proving to be difficult hurdles, but dry soil conditions make soil sampling especially difficult," Great Lakes Laboratories. "Not only are soil sampling conditions challenged by dry soil, but lab results take more interpretations than seasons with adequate circumstances."

### So what do we do?

"Soil sampling consistently at the same time of year is a preferred practice for tracking changes over time," says Dennis Bowman, Illinois Extension digital ag specialist. "However, waiting for good conditions is better than getting a bad sample now."

**Spring sampling when more uniform moisture is available and nutrients have been released from the previous crop residue is becoming popular**, but there are cautions when making applications during the same season as planting, such as salt injury or inadequate nutrient levels for growing plants.

"A soil test is just a snapshot," says Travis Meteer, Illinois Extension beef specialist. "You don't want to take that snapshot when everything is shut down."

**Best advice: When possible, postpone soil testing until moisture can allow normal nutrient cycling.** If you do take dry samples, consult with your Extension professional to accurately interpret the results.



Read the full blog.  
[grazingforage.com/blog/drought-soil-test](https://grazingforage.com/blog/drought-soil-test)

## Illinois Grower Wins It All at World Dairy Expo

Theo and Rose Peterson of Peterson Farm, Poplar Grove, Ill., exhibited the overall grand champion forage at the 41st World Forage Analysis Superbowl at World Dairy Expo in Madison, Wis. Peterson Farm's baleage entry topped 232 competitors. Read more at Farm Progress.

Other Illinois winners include:

- Kendall Guither, Walnut: Baleage first place
- Peterson Farm, Poplar Grove: Commercial Hay, fifth place
- Reimer Goat Dairy, Capron: Dairy Hay, fourth place

### Don't miss these outstanding winter events

- Common Ground North: DECEMBER 7
- American Forage & Grassland Council: JANUARY 12 - 15
- GrassWorks Grazing Conference 2026: JANUARY 22 - 24
- Driftless Region Beef Conference 2026: JANUARY 22 - 23
- U.S. Custom Harvesters Annual Convention: January 29 - 31
- Cattle Industry Convention and NCBA Trade Show: February 3 - 5
- Midwest Forage Association/Wisconsin Custom Operators Symposium: February 16 - 18



Registration information is available for all events at [illinoisforage.org/events](https://illinoisforage.org/events)



## Plan now for your 2026 dues

Working together, we can build an agriculture future that supports farm families and soil health.

### Member Benefits

- All benefits of the American Forage and Grassland Council.
- Quarterly Forage Feed newsletter with articles and events of interest.
- Corporate members received complimentary standard exhibit space at two IFGC sponsored events per year and recognition in the newsletter and website.

### Member Fees

- Student Membership: \$5
- Individual Membership: \$30
- Northwest IFGC Membership: \$50
- Corporate Membership: \$200

*Pay online at the American Forage and Grassland Council*

*Pay with check with the online form and submit to Illinois Forage and Grassland Council, 214 E. 1700 North Rd., Cisco, IL 61830*

## Get the Benefits of Corporate Membership in 2026

For a few extra dollars, select a corporate membership for your operation in 2026.

- Exhibit space at no cost
- Advertisement on the IFGC website
- Advertisement in 4 issues of the IFGC newsletter



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*The Illinois Forage and Grassland Council provides the framework that unites industry, producers, educational, and government institutions for the production, marketing, and wise use of forages and grasslands.*