

PRSR MKTG  
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LaGrange, IN  
PERMIT NO. 210

Current Resident or

  
Northern Indiana  
**GRAZING CONFERENCE**  
LaGrange Co. SWCD  
910 S. Detroit St.  
LaGrange, IN 46761



Northern Indiana  
**GRAZING CONFERENCE**



**February 3–4, 2023**

**Friday, February 3**

8:00 a.m.—3:30 p.m.

**Saturday, February 4**

8:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

**Lunch and refreshments included each day.  
Registration begins at 7:00 a.m.**



Hosted by:  
**LaGrange County Soil and Water  
Conservation District**

910 South Detroit Street  
LaGrange, IN 46761  
(260) 463-3166 ext.3

LaGrange County SWCD, USDA, and partnering agencies  
are equal opportunity providers, employers, and lenders.

**Gary Zimmer:** Gary has over 40 years of experience in dairy farming and dairy nutrition. He is co-founder of Midwestern Bio Ag, and owns and operates Otter Creek Organic Farm, a 1500-acre crop and livestock farm in Wisconsin. Gary and his daughter Leilani also run Zimmer Ag, a consultation firm that serves farms and agribusiness organizations world-wide.

**Larry Weaver:** Larry and his family have owned and operated Sunrise Seeds Plus near Topeka, IN since 2005. The business ships fertilizers, seeds, animal health products and feed additives across the United States. They also operate an 80-acre, organic certified grazing farm where they raise Katahdin sheep.

**Vernon Lambright:** The Vernon Lambright family have owned and operated L&M Ag, LLC since 2009. The mission of L&M Ag is to promote soil health, fertility and good livestock nutrition practices focusing on a per farm basis by testing soil and forages and meeting soil and fertility needs by blending custom fertilizers and minerals as well as offering standard blends.

**Floyd Miller:** Floyd and Joanna Miller and family own and operate FD Miller Feed and Supply, located between Shipshewana and Topeka, Indiana along La-Grange County Road 200 S west of Indiana State Road 5. The business caters to local farmers, grazers, and the gardening community. They have been in business since 2000.

**Paul Yoder:** Paul is moderating the Business Panel Discussion this year. Paul and Martha live on a third-generation dairy grazing operation near Middlebury, IN. Their farm is organic-certified and has recently converted to “all-grass” production as well. Paul is a member of the Northern Indiana Grazing Conference Steering Committee and has been operating his farm for 13 years.

**Jerry Miller:** Jerry Miller of Topeka, IN once farmed conventionally, but a brush with cancer at a young age made him and his family resolve to live and farm as naturally and organically as possible. Recently turning most of the farming over to his son’s family, Jerry still enjoys doing garden soil tests. The Miller’s operate a garden store marketing garden fertilizers and soil amendments as well as organic minerals and non-GMO feeds.

**David Kline:** David is a semi-retired farmer of Mt. Hope, OH. He and his wife help their daughter’s family farm 150 acres/50 cow organic dairy using a blend of traditional methods and newer methods that enhances the operation’s biodiversity and profitability. David has been a beekeeper since the early 1970’s, and farms in such a way as to provide prime forage for pollinators and maximize honey production.

**Cheyenne Christianson:** Cheyenne and family have owned and operated a 70-cow dairy farm near Chetek, Wisconsin since 1993. They utilize rotational grazing, good animal and soil health practices, organic certified operation, grass-only milk production, annual and perennial forages, cover and nurse cropping practices in the management of their farm. Cheyenne writes articles for Graze magazine and shares what he has learned on his farm freely with all who are interested!

**Cletus Miller:** Cletus, Rosetta and family own and operate a 116-acre dairy farm east of Topeka, IN. They started farming in 2012. All 6 children, 3 boys and 3 girls, help on the farm. Their operation is organic-certified, they ship their milk to Organic Valley, and their herd consists of 40-45 Holsteins.

**Jay Lehman:** Jay and Michelle Lehman farm almost 200 acres west of Shipshewana, IN. Jay went full time farming with his dad, Pete, in 2016. Their farm has been in the family for 9 generations and contains a small graveyard where Jay’s many times great-grandfather is buried. The Lehman farm has been organic certified since 2006 and converted to “all grass” production in 2020. The Lehman’s also use irrigation to assist forage growth on their dairy operation.

**Wayne Bontrager:** The Bontrager’s have been farming near Topeka full-time since 2008. They market their organic-certified milk through Horizon Organic. They are also A2A2 certified and maintain a milking herd of 34-40 Holsteins.

**Ernie Miller:** Ernie is moderating the Dairy Farmer Discussion Panel this year. Ernie has been a long-time member of the Northern Indiana Grazing Conference Steering Committee. He, his wife Sue, and their family milk Jerseys on a 4th generation farm west of LaGrange, IN.

**Ernest Mast:** Ernest and Mary Etta (Yoder) were married in 1993. They moved onto her home farm in 2001. The Mast’s have 7 children. They built a milking parlor in 2002 and started shipping Grade A milk at that time. Transition to organic operation was begun in 2015. They started shipping milk to Horizon Organics in 2021. Ernest is currently milking 36 Holsteins and farming 88 acres (35 rented).

**Noah Miller:** Noah and wife Rebecca agreed soon after they met that they did not like raising produce. They live and farm on 20 acres east of Middlebury, IN where they of course...raise produce! The Millers have 9 children and are very involved in the cooperative “Horn of Plenty”. They have a 9000 sq. ft greenhouse and specialize in raising green beans and tomatoes, which they now admit, they enjoy doing!

**Kevin Kiehnau:** Kevin started dairy farming right out of high school in 1979 and operated conventionally until 1994. He then became certified organic and shipped milk to Organic Valley (Crop Coop) for 10 years. After paying off the farm in May of 2005, Kevin sold the dairy herd in July of 2005. He had started transitioning to cow/calf beef in 2000. The beef herd was sold in 2010 as the job with Organic Valley required more and more time and travel.

#### **Sheep Topics and Events:**

**Cecil King:** Cecil and wife Tina live and graze their 250 Hampshire Suffolk ewes in Pulaski County, Virginia. Cecil is now retired from the livestock nutrition business; for the last 27 years of his career, he was owner of King Ag Products and Summit Minerals.

**Jason Schneider:** The Schneiders operate a commercial meat-goat farm west of Ft. Wayne, IN. Jason has been a veterinarian for 22 years and has spent the last 15 years learning how to raise meat goats in northern Indiana.

**Levi Hershberger:** The Hershberger’s live on Ida Hershberger’s home farm of 111 acres. They graze a large flock of White Dorper sheep and have a smaller flock of Savannah/Boer goats that they graze along with the sheep. They are working toward increasing their sheep flock to 250 ewes, and the goat herd to around 50 head in the next few years.

**Jonathan Troyer:** Jonathan, wife Lisa and two daughters own a 100+ acre farm in Tuscarawas County, OH, where they maintain a flock of 225 Dorset ewes. The herd is influenced by some Polypay and Katahdin genetics, but only Dorset rams are used for breeding. The farm also includes a 600’ poultry house operated by Jonathan’s dad, which provides tons of fertilizer for the farm each year. The Troyer’s also get much assistance from Jonathan’s unmarried siblings during hay season.

**Willis Schlabach:** Willis and Linda live near Holmesville, OH on a 100-acre farm. Their 4 young sons and Willis’s parents help them with the flock of 200 Dorset/Polypay ewes that they raise using an accelerated lambing program. They rent an additional 45 acres, and raise all their own hay.



**Lodging Options**

The following is a list of hotels located close to the Michiana Event Center.

- Super 8 (260) 768-4004
- Old Carriage Inn (260) 768-7217
- Der Ruhe Blatz (260) 768-7750
- Farmstead Inn (260) 768-4595
- Blue Gate Garden Inn (260) 768-4725

**NIGC LOCATION**



Michiana Event Center  
4405 E. Farver St.  
Shipshewana, IN 46565

**NEW IN 2023**

*Saturday's schedule will host a full day of both DAIRY AND SHEEP GRAZING sessions as listed in the schedule below!*

**NORTHERN INDIANA GRAZING CONFERENCE**

**Friday, February 3**

8:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome</b> – Corneal Troyer, Chairman
8:15-9:15	<b>Keynote Speaker</b> — Gary Zimmer: “Feeding The Soil Biology Towards Profitability”
9:15-9:45	<b>BREAK</b>
9:45-11:30	• <b>Business Panel:</b> Larry Weaver, Vernon Lambright, Floyd Miller, Paul Yoder (Moderator)
9:45-10:45 10:45-11:45	Break-out Sessions: • <b>David Kline:</b> “Bees and Orchards” • <b>Jerry Miller:</b> “Basic Family Gardening”
	<b>LUNCH</b>
1:00-2:00	Break-out Sessions: • <b>Cheyenne Christianson</b> ”Grass Milk Farming Experiences” • <b>Kevin Kiehnau</b> “Transitioning From Dairy to Beef”
2:00 p.m.	<b>BREAK</b>
2:30-3:30	Break-out Sessions: • <b>Horn of Plenty Noah Miller:</b> “Opportunities on Small Acres” • <b>Cheyenne Christianson</b> : “Grass Milk Farming Experiences” (Cont and Q&A)
3:30 p.m.	<b>Dismissal</b> – Corneal Troyer

**Saturday, February 4**

8:00 a.m.	<b>Welcome</b> – Corneal Troyer, Chairman
8:15 a.m.	<b>Keynote Speaker</b> — Gary Zimmer: “Producing and Harvesting Quality forages”
	<b>DAIRY SCHEDULE</b>
9:15 a.m.	<b>BREAK</b>
9:45-11:15	<b>Dairy Farmer Panel</b> — Cletus Miller, Jay Lehman, Wayne Bontrager, Ernest Miller (Moderator)
11:15 a.m.	<b>LUNCH</b>
12:30-1:30	<b>Ernie Mast:</b> “Unconventional Thinking in a Conservation Setting”
1:30 p.m.	<b>BREAK</b>
2:00-3:00	<b>David Kline:</b> “Heartbeat of Farming”
3:00 p.m.	<b>Dismissal</b> — Corneal Troyer, Chairman
	<b>SHEEP SCHEDULE</b>
9:15-10:30	<b>Shepherds’ Panel</b> – Mid Ohio Shepherds
10:30-11:00	<b>BREAK</b>
11:00-11:45	<b>Cecil King:</b> “Nutrition”
	<b>LUNCH</b>
12:45-1:30	<b>Jason Schneider</b> “What EweNeed to Know About Parasites”
1:30-1:45	<b>BREAK</b>
1:45-2:30	<b>Cecil King: Markets</b>
2:30-3:00	<i>Joining David Kline session</i>

**CONFERENCE REGISTRATION**

First \_\_\_\_\_  
 Middle \_\_\_\_\_  
 Last \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Fees: 2 YEARS AND UNDER FREE**  
**Reduced rate until January 28** (indicate # attending)

Per day (FRI) \$45 \_\_\_\_ (SAT) \_\_\_\_ Both \$65 \_\_\_\_  
 Seniors (65 and over) and Children (3 -15 years)  
 Per day (FRI) \$25 \_\_\_\_ (SAT) \_\_\_\_ Both days \$40 \_\_\_\_  
**After January 28** (indicate number attending)

Per day (FRI) \$60 \_\_\_\_ (SAT) \_\_\_\_ Both \$90 \_\_\_\_  
 Seniors (65 and over) and Children (3 -15 years)  
 Per day (FRI) \$25 \_\_\_\_ (SAT) \_\_\_\_ Both days \$40 \_\_\_\_  
**Total Enclosed \$** \_\_\_\_\_

Receipts will be available at the registration table upon request at the event.

**LIST ALL NAMES**  
**for registration attendance and specify which day for each:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Fri.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sat.	_____
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**Checks payable to:**  
**Northern Indiana Grazing Conference**  
 910 S. Detroit St., LaGrange, IN 4676  
**\*NO REGISTRATIONS BY PHONE\* (RB)**