

Master Farmer passes away

By HOLLY SPANGLER

ROGER Allaman, a Roseville farmer and 2008 Master Farmer, passed away Nov. 22, 2008, at the age of 64, following a battle with a cancerous brain tumor.

I first came to know Roger as a young freshman at the University of Illinois. His daughter, Lori, was one of my first

Commentary

roommates at 4-H House, and Roger was the all-American Illini dad. He even met his wife, Jule, at U of I. "We loved every minute down there," he had said.

Roger and Jule began farming in 1971, joining his father's operation. Over the years, the operation grew

to 2,000 acres and, at one time, a sizable hog operation. Roger's analytical nature and attention to numbers led him to join FBFM. Over the years, he developed spreadsheets to improve his operation's profit analysis.

When Roger was selected as a Master Farmer this past year, I spent time on his farm, taking photos and talking with him and Jule. One of the most heartwarming



ROGER ALLAMAN

things to watch that day was how he took time with his two small grandsons, 5-year-old Cooper and 3-year-old Carter. They were playing with Grandma and Grandpa that day while their dad, Doug, helped plant corn.

One of the side effects of Roger's cancerous tumor was a gradual loss of eyesight; at that point, he couldn't drive a tractor, but he could still share plenty with his grandsons. That morning, he'd already offered a pre-K biology lesson on how a seed germinates. He really enjoyed showing them the soil and talking about how to take care of it — all in a way they'd understand.

During our interview, I asked Roger what he liked most about farming. His response: "I love the planting season and watching plants grow. I like the challenges that are presented in farming. It makes you really think about what you need to be doing in life."

Alfalfa strategies at teleconference

UNIVERSITY of Illinois Extension has scheduled a Feb. 9 teleconference to help farmers maximize alfalfa production.

The workshop, "Making Every Dollar Count," begins at 9:30 a.m. and wraps up at 12:15 p.m. The program will be delivered via teleconference at more than 20 participating Extension offices across the state. Registration will begin at 9 a.m.

This will be the fourth annual alfalfa teleconference. Attendance has increased each year, with 142 listeners in 2008. This year, the focus will be on economics. "Just about every topic on the agenda will have an economic twist," says Jim Morrison, Extension educator, crop systems.

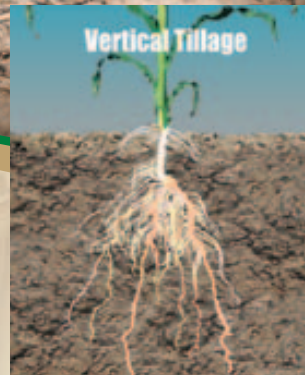
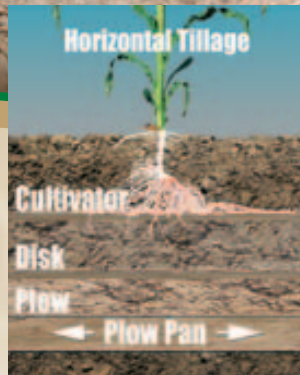
Mark Sulc, Ohio State University Extension forage specialist, will discuss "Producing Alfalfa Competitively with Corn." Fabián Fernández, U of I Extension soil fertility specialist, will present "Fertilizing Alfalfa in Tight Times." Kevin Steffey, Extension entomologist at U of I, will address "Leafhoppers and Weevils: Do Treatment Thresholds Still Apply?" Ken Moore, agronomist at Iowa State University, will comment on "Forages as a Biomass Crop." Participants will be able to interact with the speakers.

Continuing education units for certified crop advisers have been requested. The program is sponsored by U of I Extension. There will be a \$15 fee for the workshop.

Source: University of Illinois

■ For more information and to register, call 815-732-2191.

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