

LIVESTOCK, AN IMPORTANT PIECE OF THE WEED CONTROL PUZZLE. Gary Reding, Langeland Farms, Inc., Greensburg, IN 47240.

Gary Reding was a conventional farmer but is now transitioning 600 acres to organic production at Langeland Farms in SE Indiana. Sir Albert Howard said, “Mother Nature never attempts to farm without livestock.” Learn how this statement encouraged Gary to mimic nature in his weed management strategies. Livestock have played a major role in controlling weeds during and after the transition in several ways. To begin, Gary intensively grazes cattle and goats on short-term pastures in his rotation; a practice which disrupts the lifecycle of key weeds such as giant ragweed and Canada thistle. Also, fall grazing of corn stover minimizes the volunteer corn issues in his popcorn, soybean, small grains and hay rotation. And furthermore, buffer areas around crop fields are grazed/baled for hay to keep forbs and fescue from creeping into the high value organic grain fields. In addition to weed control, Gary will briefly discuss meat sales and the increased organic matter observed when forages are added to the crop rotation as other ways in which livestock add value to the overall farm operation.