FREDDY’S FRIENDS
A Story About Forages

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Freddy’s grandma was baking cookies. “Go visit the animals in the pasture,” she said, “the cookies will be done when you come back.” Out he ran.

Other cattle were far out in the pasture. They were eating, too. "Good FORAGE makes strong muscles and healthy animals," the cow told Freddy. "We eat FORAGE because it is good for us."

"What is a FORAGE?" asked Freddy. "Glad you asked," said the cow. "FORAGES are plants like alfalfa, clover and grasses. They make good feed for cows, horses, sheep and goats."
The sheep in the next field poked his head through the fence and said to Freddy, "I eat FORAGE, too; it makes my wool coat grow thick and long. That sweater you are wearing was made from my wool." "Wow," said Freddy, "This is my favorite sweater. It is nice and warm."

Freddy said "Bye" to the cow and the sheep. He ran across the pasture to see the big horse. "Hey, Freddy," said the horse. "This good grass makes me feel strong! Do you want to climb on my back and go for a ride?" Of course, Freddy wanted to go.
Up on the horse's back Freddy could see far and wide as they trotted along. They went quickly through the pasture as quail and pheasants flew up and out of their way. "FORAGES make good places for wild birds and rabbits to make nests and to stay warm during the winter," the horse told Freddy.

"Forages are not just used for food," said the horse. "That's Farmer Tucker's farm over there. He plants FORAGE crops to keep the soil loose and good for growing other crops like corn and wheat."
“Farmer Tucker also plants FORAGE crops to keep soil from being washed or blown away on slopes and hills. The roots go deep into the soil and help to hold the soil in place.”

The horse stopped for a drink at a nearby creek. As Freddy bent to look into the water, a fish gurgled to the top. “Hi, Kid,” he bubbled “I’m sure glad Farmer Tucker plants grasses on the streambanks. It helps keep my water clean by holding the soil in place on the streambank.”
The horse took Freddy to a fence at the edge of the pasture. They looked at the road below. "Those highway workers are planting grass on the slopes and hillsides along the highway. This will keep the soil from washing onto the road," said Freddy. "You learn fast," said the horse.

"Different FORAGES are grown in different parts of the country. Some plants can live in cold weather and some prefer hot. Farmer Tucker chose good ones to plant," the horse told Freddy as they started back home. Freddy waved at the sheep and the cow along the way.
"FORAGES are friends of man, animals and wildlife. They provide food for most, protection from the weather for some, and keep the soil in place," the horse told Freddy as he stopped by the kitchen door. "Can I come visit you again?" asked Freddy.

"Sure, Freddy, anytime," said the horse. Freddy hurried into the house to tell Grandma what he had learned from his farm friends. Of course, he had some freshly baked cookies with milk!