

## **PLT16 Maine State Supplement 2012-1** **Intensive Rotational Grazing**

This applies to grazed pasture already in a rotational system. The goal is to increase the number of paddocks by at least 75%, thus improving the utilization rate of the available forage. This assumes there is adequate forage for the number of animals grazed.

This Enhancement involves subdividing the existing paddocks into smaller portions and moving animals more frequently than is currently done, thereby increasing stocking density. Where paddocks are made of temporary fence rather than permanent subdivisions, the paddock size will be made smaller.

The minimum rotation frequency for this Enhancement is once per week. Moves should be based upon forage condition and height, leaving a minimum of 3 inches of height when animals are removed.

The minimum total number of paddocks for this Enhancement is 5. Size is based upon animal/forage balance. Utilize the Maine Grazing Plan Spreadsheet to develop an animal/forage balance and to determine the paddock size and total acres for rotations.

These numbers will allow for a 30-day rest period. Late in the grazing season, a longer rest period (42 or more days) will be needed. Therefore, 7 or more paddocks are highly recommended. On ground of average productivity, total pasture size of 1.5 acres per animal unit should provide adequate forage if rotated and rested.

Note: The less frequent animals are rotated to a new paddock, the more soiling, trampling, and wasting of forage will occur. Paddock size and total acres may be adjusted upward by 25 % or more to account for rotations less frequent than one or two days. To maintain adequate production, dairy cows should be moved at least daily, and preferably after each milking.