



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Plant Resource Enhancement Activity PLT10 - *Intensive Management of Rotational Grazing Enhancement*



Intensive Management of Rotational Grazing

This enhancement is for the intensive management of livestock grazing to increase production, and improve forage quality and livestock health. The grazing system is managed to produce high quality, nutritious forage and maintain plants with sufficient energy reserves to recover quickly when adequate soil moisture is available for regrowth.

Generally, livestock are rotated through pastures in the grazing system based on their daily dry matter intake and nutritional requirements, and the physiological growth and

nutritional stage of the forage plants. This enhancement is for rotational grazing systems that consist of multiple paddocks and frequent rotations.

Land Use Applicability

This enhancement is applicable on pasture and rangeland.

Benefits

The main benefits of Intensive Management of Rotational Grazing are efficient resource use with increased forage utilization, improved manure distribution, and nutrient cycling throughout the grazing acreage, and increased carbon sequestration resulting from greater forage production.

Optimal environmental conditions are achieved by maintaining healthy, actively growing forage plants that protect the soil surface from erosion, thereby reducing risks to ground or surface water quality.

Criteria for Intensive Management of Rotational Grazing

A prescribed grazing plan is developed and implemented to address the following requirements.

- Manage vegetation to provide sufficient forage intake for the type and class of livestock, ensuring that sufficient vegetative material remains after a grazing event that the plants can recover and regrow. This is accomplished by dividing pastures into multiple units and using intense grazing periods followed by periods of non-grazing for regrowth of grazed vegetation. The length, intensity and frequency of grazing will vary depending upon livestock species, location and vegetation and will be determined by NRCS at the state level. In addition, the grazing system must also ensure that plants are left in condition to survive the winter or dormant periods of the year. Manage grazing and rest periods to follow NRCS Prescribed Grazing practice standard (528).
- Use a fencing system that is flexible enough to control the amount and location of grazing and confine the livestock.



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- Provide a sufficient quantity of high quality drinking water based on livestock requirements
- Manage livestock access to riparian areas to prevent pollution of surface and ground waters and to ensure the livestock are not exposed to poor quality drinking water, disease-causing insects and bacteria, and/or injury-prone physical conditions.
- Manage soil nutrients to ensure the grazing vegetation has sufficient nutrients for adequate production and plant health. Frequent rotation of pastures will provide better distribution of manure and urine. However, supplemental fertilization may be needed. Apply additional nutrients based on soil test results, realistic forage yield goals and land grant university recommendations.

Documentation Requirements

- 1) Provide a prescribed grazing plan that addresses the criteria for this enhancement
- 2) Provide a map or aerial photo showing the pastures/paddocks making up the rotational grazing system

**ALABAMA SUPPLEMENT TO ENHANCEMENT PLT10 INTENSIVE MANAGEMENT OF
ROTATIONAL GRAZING**

This enhancement is designed to improve the forage resource and livestock health through management intense grazing. Research has shown that rotational grazing which allows adequate rest for the grasses is very important in maintaining the root system and the plants' growing points. It also promotes faster regrowth of the forage, improves soil quality and water quality.

The days of rest needed for plant recovery and regrowth range from 7 to 45 days, depending on the forage species (see below table). Stocking rates and growing conditions can also affect the forage growth. Grazing systems should be designed to meet the rest requirements of a particular forage as well as the needs of the livestock. By using four pastures with 14 days of grazing per pasture, the grazing cycle is 56 days and each pasture rests 75% of the time or 42 days.

FORAGE GUIDELINES FOR PRESCRIBED GRAZING SYSTEMS

Common Forages	Begin Grazing (in)	End Grazing (in)	Usual days of Rest
Alfalfa grazing types	10	4	35 - 40
Bahiagrass	6	2	10 - 20
Bermudagrass common	5	2	7 - 10
Bermudagrass hybrid	6	3	7 - 10
Big Bluestem	18	10	30 - 45
Dallisgrass	6	3	7 - 15
Eastern Gamagrass	15	8	30 - 45
Tall Fescue	6	3	15 - 30
Indiangrass	12	6	30 - 40
Orchardgrass	8	3	15 - 30
Switchgrass	18	10	30 - 45

Additional Alabama Criteria:

- Livestock will be rotated between at least 4 pastures in a particular functional group (warm season pastures or cool season pastures) to facilitate management intensive grazing. Starting and ending grazing periods will meet the guidelines in the above table or the Alabama NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Prescribed Grazing (528). Pastures will be sized and stocked to facilitate meeting the requirements for grazing heights and resting periods. It is anticipated that with a four pasture rotation that each pasture would rest about 75 percent of the grazing cycle.
- Adjustments to grazing management should be made as needed to address unexpected impacts of weather changes or even agricultural markets.

References: AL NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Prescribed Grazing (528)
Southern Forages, 4th Edition, D. M. Ball, et al.

Grazing Management Records

Keeping accurate records is a continual process in effective pasture and livestock management. Records help you track pasture conditions and effectively manage each pasture in your grazing system.

Pasture ID		Pasture acres	Forage type			
Soil test date		Lime/ Fertilizer rate	Lime/ Fertilizer type		Date applied	
Livestock		Date in	Forage height	Date out	Forage height	Notes (fertilizer applied)
Type	Number					

Pasture ID		Pasture acres	Forage type			
Soil test date		Lime/ Fertilizer rate	Lime/ Fertilizer type		Date applied	
Livestock		Date in	Forage height	Date out	Forage height	Notes (fertilizer applied)
Type	Number					

ALABAMA SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION FOR THIS ENHANCEMENT
PLT10 – *Intensive Management of Rotational Grazing Enhancement*

Producer Name:		Date:	
County:			
Tract(s)			
Field(s)			

- A prescribed grazing plan will follow the Prescribed Grazing Standard (528) in Alabama and include a minimum of the following:
 - Number of paddocks: Four or more
 - Frequency of rotation: 15 days or less
 - Days of recovery: 14 or more depending on the season and re-growth
 - Minimum grazing heights will be maintained as listed or higher (see Alabama Prescribed Grazing Standard (528))
 - Travel distance of livestock to water will be less than 800'
 - Nutrient management will be based on soil test, forage composition and livestock forage needs
 - Records documenting grazing heights, grazing and resting periods, supplemental feed needs

Attach a copy of the prescribed grazing plan and appropriate management records.

The attached plan and related documents accurately represent the implementation of this enhancement.

SIGNATURE: _____ **DATE:** _____