Animal Enhancement Activity - ANM30 – Ultra high density grazing system to improve soil quality

Enhancement Description
This enhancement is for the management of grazing acreages using high stock densities, also known as "mob grazing". This management style utilizes short grazing periods, and then long rest periods giving plants ample time for full regrowth.

Land Use Applicability
Pastureland, rangeland and forestland.

Benefits
Following an high density grazing system improves soil quality in the following ways under some conditions; the trampling of vegetation, uniform manure distribution and additional litter accelerates microbe activity, increases soil organic matter and water infiltration. In addition the plant community benefits through increased root fibers and forage diversity resulting in drought resistant pastures and more diversity in the forage. The extended periods of rest between grazing periods improves wildlife habitat

Criteria
State will determine those site condition in which this enhancement is not applicability and could result in negative environmental impact.

High stock density will be used to improve the acreage being grazed. This will be accomplished by

- Increasing stock density to a level that achieves trampling, manure distribution and forage consumption to a level that improves soil health and plant diversity.
    - Stock density rates should be a minimum of 50,000 lbs. per acre for 75% of the grazing season to achieve the desired animal impact.
    - Adequate plant recovery periods are provided after grazing with each acre not being grazed before the plants are fully recovered.
    - Grazing periods should be no longer than 1 day (24 hours) or less.
    - Livestock should be removed after 50% to 60% of available forage has been consumed.
    - Soil cover is maintained at 100% following grazing activity
    - Maintaining a minimum of 10% standing residue after grazing helps insure adequate animal performance

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Documentation Requirements

1. Provide a written grazing plan that includes:

- Stocking rate each month for the area to be grazed, including kind, number, class and average weights for each class.
- Stocking density to be used (lbs. /ac.).
- Size, number, and location of paddocks
- Estimate grazing period (hours) for each paddock
- Dates paddock were grazed
- Notes that document grazing impact on paddock, e.g. forage utilization as light to heavy, percent of ground cover and standing residue.

2. Representative photographs
3. Map showing layout and size of fields paddocks.

NRCS Pasture Notes, graziers notebooks, or other record keeping systems for pasture livestock operations can be used to facilitate planning and record-keeping.

ALABAMA SUPPLEMENT TO ANIMAL ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY – ANM30 – ULTRA HIGH DENSITY GRAZING SYSTEM TO IMPROVE SOIL QUALITY.

The purpose of this enhancement is to improve soil quality by utilizing livestock hoof action to mix plant residues and manure with soil which will improve nutrient cycling process and microbial activity. Additional associated benefits may include yield increase, better drought tolerance and animal health. The improved soil health will lead to increased plant diversity, vigor and water infiltration. Forage yields should increase without the addition of other nutrients. This type of management, along with extended periods of rest may improve wildlife habitat, as well.

Additional Alabama Criteria:

- Refer to Alabama Guide Sheet AL528a entitled, Ultra High Density Grazing.
- This grazing method should take place between March and November, depending on type of forage.
- Livestock will be rotated between numerous pastures in a particular functional group (warm season pastures or cool season pastures) to facilitate ultra high density grazing Full plant recovery and regrowth will be required before regrazing.
- Pastures will be sized and stocked to facilitate meeting the requirements for stocking rates and grazing periods. Adjustments to grazing management should be made as needed to address unexpected impacts of weather changes, animal health or even agricultural markets.
- Livestock will rotate to another pasture when about 50% of the beginning dry matter has been consumed and about 50% of the target forage species has reached the “ending grazing height referenced in the guide sheet.
- Refer to the NRCS Ultra High Density Grazing Guide Sheet AL528a document for additional guidance on implementing this enhancement.

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

January 2011

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.

Producer: _____ Farm ID: _____

Pasture ID		Pasture acres		Forage Type(s)			
Soil test date		Lime/ Fertilizer rate		Lime/ Fertilizer type		Date applied	

Livestock			Date in	Ave. Forage height	Date out	Ave. Forage height	Calculated or measured dry matter at beginning of grazing
Type	Number	Ave. Weight (lbs)					

Pasture ID		Pasture acres		Forage Type(s)			
Soil test date		Lime/ Fertilizer rate		Lime/ Fertilizer type		Date applied	

Livestock			Date in	Ave. Forage height	Date out	Ave. Forage height	Calculated or measured dry matter at beginning of grazing
Type	Number	Ave. Weight (lbs)					

ALABAMA SUPPLEMENT TO PLANT ACTIVITY PLT10 - INTENSIVE MANAGEMENT OF ROTATIONAL GRAZING ENHANCEMENT

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

- An ultra high density grazing plan will include the following:
    - Number and identity of paddocks
    - Frequency of rotation: 1 day or less
    - Estimated days of recovery:
    - Minimum grazing heights will be maintained as listed or higher (see Alabama Prescribed Grazing Standard (528) and Ultra High Density Grazing Guide Sheet
    - 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:_____

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