

## Animal Enhancement Activity - ANM29 – On-farm forage based grazing system



### Enhancement Description

A forage based grazing system that supplies all roughage (forage and hay) requirements for a livestock operation.

### Land Use Applicability

Pastureland, rangeland and forestland.

### Benefits

Forage based grazing systems reduce the time that livestock are confined resulting in less manure to store and allows manure to become a fertilizer instead of a pollutant. Management of perennial grass and forb ground cover improves nutrient and water cycling, soil structure and increases organic matter. Energy conservation is achieved by reducing annual cropping, transport of feed and less reliance on synthetic nitrogen.

### Criteria

1. A forage based grazing system is used to provide all livestock feed and nutrient needs for the duration that the animals are on the producers land.
2. Livestock operations include those that produce cattle, sheep, goats, etc.
3. Manage pasture grazing and rest periods to follow NRCS Prescribed Grazing practice standard (528) criteria for recommended maximum (begin) and minimum (end) grazing heights by forage species or Ecological Site Description interpretations. Begin and end grazing heights are followed to maximize forage quality and palatability and promote rapid recovery and forage regrowth.
  - a. Maintain a livestock watering system that accommodates an appropriate grazing strategy through several different pastures or paddocks during the grazing season.
  - b. Follow NRCS practice standard criteria for Prescribed Grazing (528), Watering Facility (614), Pipeline (516), or other related standards for appropriate supply and travel distance to water.
  - c. Use fencing that is permanent, semi-permanent, and/or temporary to facilitate pasture rotation and/or livestock distribution improvement. Follow the NRCS Fence practice standard (382).

### Documentation Requirements

1. Provide a written grazing plan following the 'Plans and Specifications' guidelines in the Prescribed Grazing standard. Include time and timing of grazing, minimum and maximum grazing heights, season of use, grazing records and monitoring plan of pastures/paddocks in the grazing plan, as appropriate for the landuse.

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

**ALABAMA SUPPLEMENT TO ANIMAL ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY ANM29- ON-FARM FORAGE BASED GRAZING SYSTEM**

This enhancement is designed to improve nutrient and water cycling, soil structure and increases soil organic matter while promoting energy conservation. Perennial forages are managed to provide all of the livestock feed and nutrient needs while livestock are on the producer's land.

Grazing will be managed according to the Prescribed Grazing (528) Standard. 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. For example, 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**

<b>Common Forages</b>	<b>Begin Grazing (in)</b>	<b>End Grazing (in)</b>	<b>Usual days of Rest</b>
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 3 pastures in a particular functional group (warm season pastures or cool season pastures) to facilitate prescribed 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 three pasture rotation that each pasture would rest about 66 percent of the grazing cycle. Additional pastures will enable additional rest.
- Adjustments to grazing management should be made as needed to address unexpected impacts of weather changes or even agricultural markets.
- The practice of stockpiling forages and strip grazing is encouraged where possible.

References: AL NRCS Conservation Practice Standard, Prescribed Grazing (528)  
Southern Forages, 4<sup>th</sup> 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 SUPPLEMENT TO PLANT ACTIVITY 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: Three 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:** \_\_\_\_\_