



United States Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Illinois Factsheet

# GOOD Grazing MAKES GOOD \$ense



**Carzella Pritchett**

Goats, Cows, Sheep, and Chicken Operation  
Sangamon County, Illinois

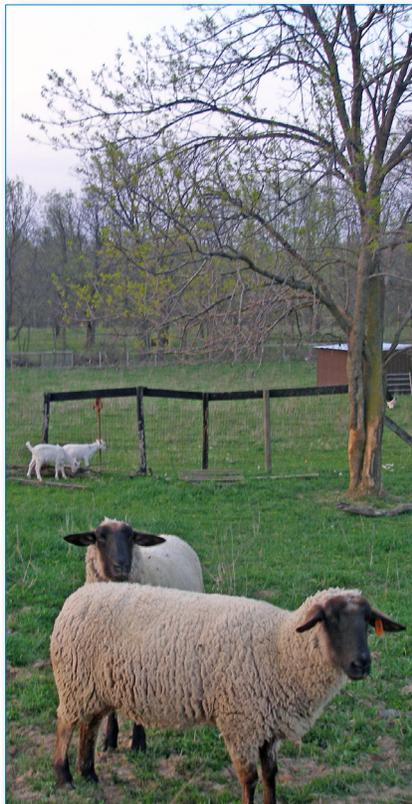
### A Busy Lady

Carzella Pritchett owns and operates a 10-acre farm in Sangamon County, Illinois. A former horse farm, she purchased it in 2005. You could say it's a hobby farm since Carzella works full-time for the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). However, looking closer you can easily see this too is a full-time job with 5 cows, 13 goats, 13 sheep and 250 chickens.

Ask her why she bought a farm while already working full-time and she replies "I need to stay busy," which is an understatement. With her children all grown and moved away, the animals fill a void.

### Multi-Species Operation

She began her venture with the Silvered-eared goats. They are raised specifically to sell to the local African population. Then came the chickens—with a majority of them being layers. About 50 are Cornish Cross chickens which are sold for meat. Next the Angus and Herford cows joined in, followed by Katahdin and Suffolk sheep to make up the rest of the family. "I just love them, they are so colorful," she remarked about the Katahdin sheep.

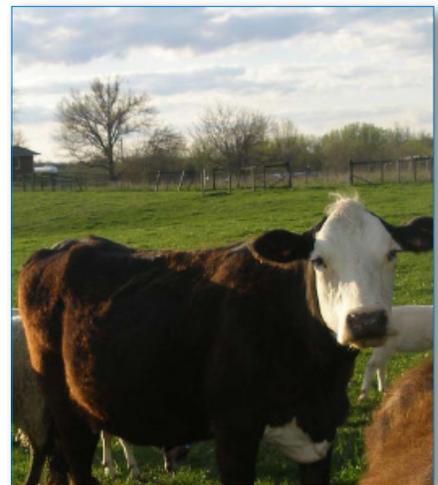


### Getting the Farm In Order

Although the pasture, which consisted mostly of legumes, was in relatively good shape when she purchased the farm, there were some soil erosion problems on the site. So, Pritchett had a conservation plan developed to address the issues.

Her conservation plan included the establishment of a grade stabilization structure to protect against further soil erosion and a planned grazing system for the pasture.

Naturally, she sought assistance through NRCS' popular conservation program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Her conservation plan calls for the entire pasture to be split into smaller pastures, or



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paddocks, so she can rotate the animals as they graze. The EQIP contract gives her five years to complete the additions; her plans are to have it all done much sooner.

### **Get a Good Grazing Plan & Some Local Help**

*"I plan to have it split into two 5-acre paddocks, but there might be more,"* said Pritchett. *"I want to get the watering stations installed first."* The new system will make the operation easier to handle. Being a single person, she said it gets difficult dragging those hoses around. She hires help when needed though. During the very hot and cold times of the year, she hires her young neighbor girl to

help gather the eggs. *"I can't always get out there before the eggs are damaged during extreme weather,"* says Pritchett. She also had help removing the old fencing and with other more strenuous activities.

The farm animals are raised organic, even though she is not certified as organic. All products are sold locally. The chickens are processed at the local Amish plant. When there is excess food, she shares it with family and friends or local charities, such as the food pantry and the Women and Children's shelter.

When asked why she took on such a large project at this time in her life, she said, *"I have a goal - to eat*

*healthy, stay active and to live a long productive life."* Besides the animals, she maintains a garden too. There she grows herbs, greens, squash, and corn *"for me."*

### **Additional Information**

If you need more information about grazing and programs, contact the NRCS District Conservationist at your local USDA Service Center (listed in the telephone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture), or contact your local soil and water conservation district. Information also is available on the web at:

[www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/](http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/).