



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

Illinois Factsheet

GOOD Grazing MAKES GOOD \$ense



Ernie & Judy Duckworth
Cows/Heifers/Angus/Boers Operation
Franklin County, Illinois

Welcome to “Jed’s” Farm

Ernie Duckworth, a Franklin County, Illinois farmer launched an experiment where livestock share paddocks in an intensive grazing system. He has 20 cows, along with 11 heifers in his Angus-Simmental herd. He now also has 31 head of Boer does along with one buck.

His grazing system is nearly complete and fully functional. The pasture system is equipped for intensive grazing of beef cattle, with 13 paddocks in his 43-acre pasture. Plans are to add more strands to the fences to keep the goats in.

The mix keeps Duckworth’s pastures clean, healthy, and full of vigor. According to Ernie, it’s a green way of controlling the weed population because goats eat weeds and stuff cattle won’t eat.

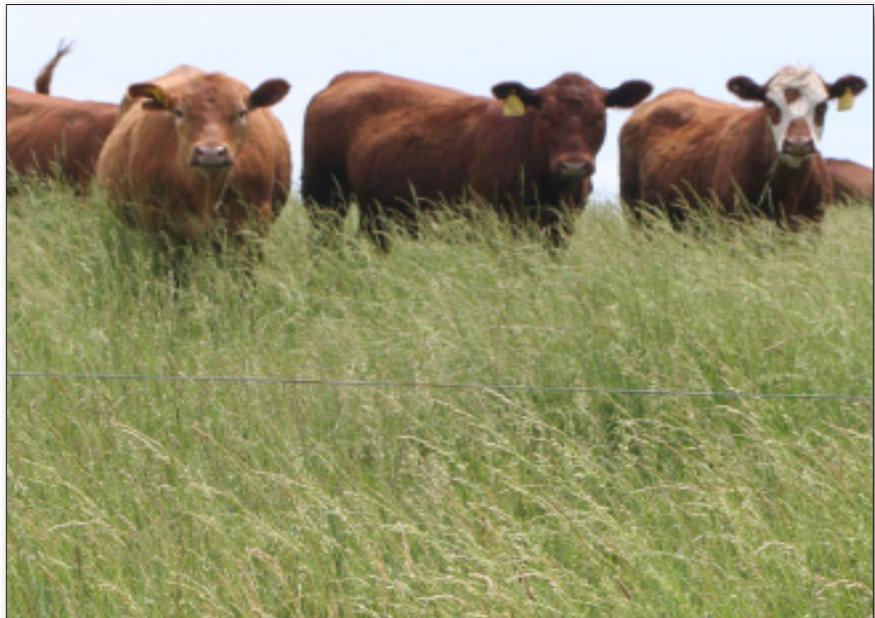
A Diverse Operation

When it comes to farming, Duckworth is a great—and successful—experimenter. He began an intensive grazing program years ago when the concept was still new. He and wife Judy also grow fruits and vegetables in a field across the road from their pastures.

Duckworth has an efficient watering system, thanks to some assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). EQIP helped ensure the long-term success and profitability of his grazing operation.

Goats Are In!

How is the goat business? You might be surprised. While the amount of goat meat consumed in the United States is tiny compared to beef, pork and chicken, there is plenty of demand. About 70% of goats consumed in the US are imported—which means



Helping People Help the Land.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

www.il.nrcs.usda.gov



The diverse operation on Jed's Farm--cattle, pasture, goats, and berries--allows for a healthy and ever-changing and sustainable agricultural community that Ernie and Judy find to be profitable--and a lot of fun!



there is a market out there. Goat meat is coveted by many residents of Middle Eastern heritage, among others. The Duckworths have established a marketing plan with a local buyer who takes their goats and sells them in Ohio.

Duckworth expects to continue with the goats and may expand the herd in the future.

According to NRCS Grazing Specialist Roger Staff, *"He's got a great operation and a vision of where he's going."*

"I think his diverse operation is a good idea because when the cattle market's not great, the goats can help with that," Staff explains. "The Duckworth operation knows we have a vast ethnic diversity in this country and their grazing operation

allows a way to tap into that. Plus, he does it all in an environmentally sustainable way, so it's a win-win situation."

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/.



Harnessing USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs to Support Local and Regional Food Systems