

## **GRAZING MANAGEMENT (CSP Enhancement)**



### **Enhancement Activities**

Enhancement activities refer to actions that provide resource benefits beyond the level prescribed by NRCS Conservation Practice Standards. Once implemented, enhancement activities should result in an observable or measurable improvement to the condition of one or more of the soil, water, air, plant, or animal resources, or provide for more efficient resource utilization and/or energy conservation.

### **Enhancement Activity Benefits**

Enhancement activities associated with Grazing Management such as increasing the intensity of rotational grazing, providing special protection to riparian areas, or estimating forage quality and animal performance can result in the following benefits to the producer and the environment:

- Reduced risks to ground and surface water quality
- Increased ecosystem health for better water cycling, mineral cycling, and biologic integrity
- Lower costs by increasing efficiency of your operation

### **CSP Payments**

You can earn payments by participating in any of the following activities:

- Improve species composition by applying results from at least 5 photo points
- Improve utilization by applying annual results from at least 5 photo plots
- Improve management efficiency by attending advanced seminar or workshop relating to livestock or ecology at least once every 5 years
- Improve utilization of forage and distribution of livestock by applying annual results from at least 5 forage monitoring exclosures
- Improve utilization of forage and distribution of livestock by applying annual results from 5 key transect areas
- Manage feed & forage to meet organic livestock certification requirements of WDA
- Manage grazing in riparian areas to improve riparian health
- Manage off-site water sources to improve riparian health
- Manage pasture soils mechanically on annual basis to improve aeration
- Manage timing of grazing in specified areas to promote native bunch-grasses
- Use Nutritional Balance Analyzer (NUTBAL) to apply recommendations on an annual basis to improve grazing management

**CSP Enhancements earnings are subject to payment caps. Your actual payment will depend on your CSP Tier level and the number of acres enrolled.**



**Worksheet 1: Improve species composition by applying results from at least 5 photo points**

Payment = \$250/year.

**Description:** A quality monitoring plan developed with appropriate records assesses whether the grazing strategy is meeting objectives. Identify the key areas (at least 5 per operating unit) and key plants to evaluate in making grazing management decisions. The photo monitoring will be accomplished annually (at approximately the same time of year) at the designated key areas.

**Requirements:** The intent is to compare photos taken at the same location over time. A great deal of care must be taken to ensure that photos are repeated in exactly the same location, using the same techniques, and in the same season of the year. This is accomplished by permanently marked GPS or physical markers such as stakes. Each photo transect must be laid out in the same direction.

**Worksheet 2: Improve utilization by applying annual results from at least 5 photo plots**

Payment = \$250/year

**Description:** Monitoring plan developed with appropriate records to assess whether the grazing strategy is meeting objectives. Identify the key areas and key plants that the manager should evaluate in making grazing management decisions.

**Requirements:** The monitoring will be carried out on an annual basis for each unit. The monitoring will be carried out using the methods in the following fact sheet by the University of California – Davis: [http://animalscience.ucdavis.edu/extension/Factsheets/RangelandResources/pdfs/Utilization\\_of\\_Forage\\_2.PDF](http://animalscience.ucdavis.edu/extension/Factsheets/RangelandResources/pdfs/Utilization_of_Forage_2.PDF)

**Worksheet 3: Improve management efficiency by attending advanced seminar or workshop relating to livestock or ecology at least once every 5 years**

Payment = \$300/year

**Description:** Multi-day seminars or workshops on wildlife management, plant/animal identification, grazing/plant/animal monitoring, holistic decision-making, web development, grazing planning, low stress livestock management, or low-cost cow-calf production. May include more than one attendee from the operation.

**Requirements:** May include more than one attendee from the operation.



**Worksheet 4: Improve utilization of forage and distribution of livestock by applying annual results from at least 5 forage monitoring exclosures**

Payment = \$250/year for monitoring vegetation attributes and utilization.

**Description:** Excluding livestock from small reference areas is a common approach to demonstrate the effects and impacts of livestock management. These grazing exclosures/cages have been especially valuable visual references to help people understand the role of grazing management, climate, and initial vegetation in determining current vegetation and land stability. Grazing cages have proven to be our best tool to help people understand the ecological impacts of livestock management.

**Requirements:** The cages will be at least 4 feet square. The cages will be established in spring prior to beginning of herbaceous growth. A new location will be chosen each spring. The area under the cage will be selected to be representative of the species composition and ground cover of the pasture. Photographic records showing forage within and outside of a utilization cage for at least a 3-year period are the required deliverable.

**Worksheet 5: Improve utilization of forage and distribution of livestock by applying annual results from 5 key transect areas.**

Payment = \$250/year

**Description:** A monitoring plan is developed with appropriate records to assess whether the grazing strategy is meeting objectives. Identify the key areas and key plants that will be evaluated in making grazing management decisions. The utilization transects will be accomplished annually at the designated key areas.

**Requirements:** the intent is to compare transects taken at the same location over time. A great deal of care must be taken to ensure that transects are repeated in exactly the same location. This is accomplished by GPS coordinates and/or physical markers such as stakes. Each transect must be laid out in the same direction. Recommended procedures are in 'Utilization Studies and Residual Measurements,' Interagency Technical Reference, Date 1996, pages 89-102, Height-Weight Method. The reference is an appendix of NRCS National Range and Pasture Handbook available in the local field office or the following url: <http://www.blm.gov/nstc/library/pdf/utilstudies.pdf>



**Worksheet 6: Manage feed forage to meet organic livestock certification requirements of WDA**

Payment = \$0.50/acre east of the Cascades; \$1.00/acre west of the Cascades

**Description:** The Organic Food Program provides certification services for organic livestock producers in accordance with National Organic Standards. This enhancement applies only to ruminant production systems.

**Requirements:** An application for organic livestock certification can be accessed via the internet at the links below or by the following contact information:

Washington State Department of Agriculture

Organic Food Program

Phone: (360) 902-1805

Email: [organic@agr.wa.gov](mailto:organic@agr.wa.gov)

<http://agr.wa.gov/FoodAnimal/Organic/LivestockProducers.htm>

**Worksheet 7: Manage grazing in riparian areas to improve riparian health**

Payment = \$50/acre for riparian area excluded from grazing by livestock east of the Cascade Crest.

\$300/acre for riparian area excluded from grazing by livestock west of the Cascade Crest.

**Description:** Prevent domestic livestock from grazing riparian areas by barring access (barriers) in order to improve riparian conditions and health (hydrologic, soil, and biotic).

**Requirements:** This enhancement is permanent use exclusion (for the length of the stewardship contract). Riparian areas need to be evaluated prior to and during exclusion to determine if desired ecological changes are occurring. Weed control and other maintenance will be performed as needed.

**Worksheet 8: Manage off-site water sources to improve riparian health**

Payment = East of Cascades=\$250/year – new and additional development (one-time payment) for livestock or wildlife watering facility.

Payment=West of Cascades=\$100/year – new and additional development (one-time payment) for livestock or wildlife watering facility.

**Description:** Provide off-site watering facility and exclude domestic livestock from grazing riparian areas, springs and seeps to aid the management or restoration of habitat for targeted fish and wildlife.

**Requirements:** This applies to new and additional watering facilities and not to existing watering facilities that must be repaired, replaced, or relocated. The water source must be maintained for the life of the contract.

**Worksheet 9: Manage pasture soils mechanically on annual basis to improve aeration**

Payment = \$20/acre

**Description:** Soil compaction on pastures in high rainfall areas with soils high in clay or silt content is inevitable. Grazing when soils are wet causes hoof imprints (poaching) that reduces water movement through the soil.

**Requirements:** The tines of the aerator must be set to exceed the depth to bottom of the compacted layer. The equipment must cross the field on the approximate contour and not end directly at a waterway or surface water.

**Worksheet 10: Manage timing of grazing in specified areas to promote native bunch-grasses**

Payment = \$1.00/acre for management units receiving rest.

**Description:** Management units (new or existing) on the agricultural operation are rested. Rest may be achieved using new, existing, or temporary fence.

**Requirements:** Rested means that no domestic livestock are in the unit for the entire calendar year. Include documentation of utilization, on/off dates, stocking, etc., on the other units in the system. All pastures in the contract must continue to meet the NRCS-WA Prescribed Grazing Standard (528).

**Worksheet 11: Use Nutritional Balance Analyzer (NUTBAL) to apply recommendations on an annual basis to improve grazing management.**

Payment=\$100/year for collecting and submitting fecal samples and using analysis. At least 2 samples per year are required.

**Description:** In recent years, the analysis of fecal samples, a.k.a. manure, has proven to be a useful and effective diagnostic and management tool. The combined NIRS/NUTBAL Pro System is a diagnostic and management tool that enables you to monitor the changes in forage quality over time, estimate animal performance and supplement more efficiently.

**Requirements:** Contact the GAN Lab or visit the web site. The GAN lab will mail you a starter kit that includes a Styrofoam box with ice substitute, sample sheets, instructions for collecting the fecal sample and completing the sample sheet. Also included are additional articles that you may find informative.

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