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.