



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

E528G

Improved grazing management on pasture for plant productivity and health with monitoring activities

Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture

RESOURCE CONCERN: Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Enhancement Description

Managing the harvest of vegetation with grazing and/or browsing animals as adjusted when following recommendations of a qualifying professional, as detailed in the enhancement criteria, generated through Pasture Condition Scoring (PCS).

Criteria

- Adhere to the approved existing written prescribed grazing management plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand.
- Removal of herbage will be in accordance with site production limitations, rate of plant growth, the physiological needs of forage plants, and the nutritional needs of the animals.
- Adjust intensity, frequency, timing, and duration of grazing and/or browsing (providing sufficient recovery time to meet planned, written objectives) to meet the desired objectives for the plant communities. soil compaction, and associated resources.

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- Deferment (non-grazing period less than one year) will be planned for critical periods of plant needs (such as post-planting or renovation, severe drought, etc.).
- Manage grazing and/or browsing animals to maintain adequate cover on sensitive areas (such as riparian areas, wetlands, habitats of concern, karst areas, etc.)
- Manage livestock movements based on rate of plant growth, available forage, and allowable utilization target. Develop and follow contingency plans to deal with episodic disturbance events.
- Minimize concentrated livestock areas, trailing and trampling to reduce soil compaction, excess runoff, and erosion. Manage grazing so as to maintain adequate ground cover, litter, and canopy to maintain or improve infiltration and soil health.
- The management recommendations and implementation for duration and intensity of grazing and/or browsing will be based on the desired plant health and productivity objectives.
- Perform a soils test on the applicable acres for organic matter and nutrient analysis through a land grant university or accredited lab.
- Apply fertilizer and/or soil amendments according to land grant university recommendations based on a current soil test when plant vigor needs improvement.
- Follow guidelines provided by a Certified Forage and Grassland Professional, Certified Range Management Consultant, or Certified Professional in Range Management, NRCS Technical Service Provider, or a non-affiliated consultant with a bachelor or higher level degree in agronomy, soils, range science or other closely-related plant science discipline or a minimum of five years' experience in pastureland conservation planning, monitoring, and consulting regarding use of pastureland improvement practices generated through the PCS assessment tool.

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Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participants will:

- Prior to Implementation, acquire a Grazing Management Plan with all the following components: (provide to NRCS for review and approval)
 - Producer goals, objectives, and resource concerns
 - Forage inventory
 - Forage-animal balance sheet
 - Grazing plan for livestock movement
 - Location and condition of structural improvements
 - Watering sites with availability, quantity, and quality
 - Contingency plan
 - Monitoring plan
- During implementation, perform a soil test on the applicable acres.
- During implementation, secure a Certified Forage and Grassland Professional, Certified Range Management Consultant, Certified Professional in Range Management, NRCS Technical Service Provider, or a non-affiliated consultant with a bachelor or higher level degree in agronomy, soils, range science or other closely-related plant science discipline or a minimum of five years' experience in pastureland conservation planning, monitoring, and consulting regarding use of pastureland improvement practices to:
 - 1) Select a monitoring site in each forage type or forage mixture on the enrolled acreage to assess with the Pasture Condition Scoring (PCS) tool.
 - 2) Conduct assessments on those sites using the Pasture Condition Scoring tool and document the location.
 - 3) Develop a written recommendation that addresses adequate cover, litter, and canopy to maintain or improve infiltration, soil health, and reduce soil compaction and other resource concerns. The recommendation will include grazing management changes based on desired health and productivity objectives identified during the PCS assessment that should be incorporated in the existing grazing management plan.
- During implementation, complete forage utilization job sheet at the end of the grazing season for NRCS Conservation Practice Standard (CPS) Prescribed Grazing (528).

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- During implementation, identify key grazing areas and key forage species and monitor pastures for grazing utilization.
- During implementation, keep pasture/herd in/out records.
- During implementation, document adjustments needed to maintain feed and forage balance.
- After implementation, provide the following items for review by NRCS:
 - Pasture Condition Score Sheets with all field notes and locations
 - Soil test analysis
 - Written documentation from professional with recommendations and follow up actions.
 - Pasture/herd in/out dates.
 - Completed forage utilization job sheet.
 - Animal/forage balance sheet
 - Written grazing management and monitoring plan modifications which address the resource concerns identified from the PCS assessment.

NRCS will:

- As needed, provide additional technical assistance to participant as requested.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS CPS Prescribed Grazing (528) and Plan as it relates to implementing this enhancement, including forage utilization job sheet.
- Prior to implementation assist participant with development of a grazing management plan.
- Prior to implementation, provide soils information, Ecological Site Descriptions ‘ Pasture State, or Forage Suitability Groups, or other needed information as requested.
- After implementation, review all PCS sheets and written recommendations made by the professional during the PCS assessments.
- After implementation, review soil test analysis.

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- After implementation, verify the recommended changes to the grazing management plan by reviewing grazing/herd in/out records, forage utilization job sheet, animal/forage balance records and changes made to the plan that addressed the resource concerns identified during the PCS assessments.

NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name _____ Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____ Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature Date

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SOUTH DAKOTA (SD) SUPPLEMENT TO CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E528G

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Additional Criteria for SD:

In addition to the criteria specified in the national job sheet E528G, the following criteria apply in SD:

- As applicable the pasture condition score sheet will be completed separately for each different management unit. The pasture condition score should be completed on the predominant forage suitability group site within the field it is completed.
- Recommend: Participant to provide name of certified professional they are working with. Information on Certified professionals can be found at the Society for Range Management web site: <https://rangelands.org/committees/entry/52/> or at the American Forage and Grassland Council's web site: <https://www.afgc.org/i4a/pages/index.cfm?pageid=3328>.

Requirements:

1. Maximum 50 percent (%) utilization. Ocular methods on key or representative areas are adequate, but utilization methods such as landscape appearance or key species should be used to calibrate field estimates. Exceptions include dormant season grazing (60% utilization) and grazing prescriptions on rangeland that are designed to alter the present plant community through intensive grazing by livestock (i.e., suppression of invasive species). In these cases, the desired degree of use of management species should be documented within the grazing plan and/or assistance notes.
2. Adequate plant recovery periods must be provided. On pasture provide a minimum of 30 consecutive days of growing season recovery between grazing events. The growing season is approximately April 1 through October 1.
3. Alter timing of grazing in each pasture by at least 2 weeks from year to year.
4. For additional information see the SD Prescribed Grazing Standard (528) and the appropriate SD Range Technical Note.



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Additional Documentation Requirements for SD:

In addition to the documentation requirements specified in the national job sheet E528G, the following additional documentation requirements apply in SD:

- Complete the SD Grazing Tool (SD-CPA-39 Forage/Animal Inventory, Grazing Schedule using the SD-CPA-15 or similar form, and SD-CPA-16). The SD-CPA-16 will be completed annually.
- Complete a drought contingency plan using the SD Drought Tool or provide the participant with a copy of the example drought contingency plan located within the SD Prescribed Grazing Technical Note 9.
- Form SD-ECS-15 Pasture Condition Score Sheet.