



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E528N

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Improved grazing management through monitoring activities

Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Range

RESOURCE CONCERN: Soil, Water, Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Enhancement Description

Three predominant key grazing areas are evaluated utilizing the Rangeland Health Assessment (where reference material is developed) or Describing Indicators of Rangeland Health protocols (where reference material is not developed) to determine how well the ecological processes of the site(s) are functioning. Utilizing knowledge learned from this as a part of the ranch resource assessment, a qualifying professional, as detailed in the enhancement criteria, will provide recommendations or follow-up evaluations toward mitigating some of the degradation risks that are initially identified.

Criteria

- A written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand will be followed.
- Maintain diversity of rangeland plants to optimize delivery of nutrients to the animals by incorporating the intensity, frequency, timing and duration of grazing and/or browsing needed as determined by a planning process that includes: 1) Clear objectives, 2) A resource inventory including forage inventory, structural improvements and existing resource conditions, 3) Grazing plan, and 4) All potential contingency plans.

E528N-Improved grazing management through monitoring activities	August 2019	Page 1
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CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- Supplemental feed and/or minerals will be balanced with the forage consumption to meet the desired nutritional level for the kind and class of grazing and/or browsing livestock.
- Secure the services of an experienced, knowledgeable Certified Range Management Consultant, Certified Professional in Range Management, NRCS Technical Service Provider approved for CAP 110, or a non-affiliated consultant with a bachelor or higher-level degree in range science or other closely-related plant science discipline and a minimum of five years' experience in rangeland conservation planning, monitoring, and consulting regarding use of rangeland improvement practices to:
 - 1) Select monitoring sites needed (three are required for this enhancement activity)
 - 2) Assess rangeland conditions using Rangeland Health Assessment (RHA) or Describing Indicators of Rangeland Health (DIRH) at these locations
 - 3) Provide all measured data collected
 - 4) Assist in determining any areas that are potentially at risk of degradation.
 - 5) Develop a written recommendation identifying strategies for mitigating some of the degradation risks identified during the assessments
- If RHA is used, departure from reference categories will be determined, justified, and ratings described for soil and site stability, hydrologic function, and biotic integrity in Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (IIRH) Version 5 (Technical Reference 1734-6).
- If DIRH is used, guidance must be followed in the procedure of Appendix 7 of Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health (IIRH) Version 5 (Technical Reference 1734-6) and the information and data will be compared to established NRCS state criteria guidance.
- Plan monitoring activities based on the results of the assessment.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- Prior to implementation, acquire a Grazing Management Plan with all the following components: (provide plan to NRCS for review and approval)
 - Producer goals, objectives and resource concerns
 - Location and condition of structural improvements
 - Watering sites with availability, quantity and quality
 - Forage inventory
 - Forage-animal balance sheet
 - Grazing plan for livestock movement
 - Contingency plan
 - Monitoring plan

- During implementation, secure a Certified Range Management Consultant, Certified Professional in Range Management, NRCS Technical Service Provider approved for CAP 110, or a non-affiliated consultant with a bachelor or higher-level degree in range science or other closely-related plant science discipline and a minimum of five years' experience in rangeland conservation planning, monitoring, and consulting regarding use of rangeland improvement practices to:
 - 1) Select 3 monitoring sites to assess rangeland health.
 - 2) Conduct Rangeland Health Assessments (RHA) on these sites using the Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health Version 5. (Technical Reference 1734-6) **or**
 - 3) Conduct Describing Indicators of Rangeland Health (DIRH), on these sites using Appendix 7 of the Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health Version 5. (Technical Reference 1734-6).
 - 4) Develop a written recommendation identifying strategies for mitigating degradation risks identified during the assessment.

- During implementation, identify key grazing areas, key forage species and monitor pastures for grazing utilization.
- During implementation, keep pasture/herd in/out records.
- During implementation, complete NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (528) Trend worksheet.
- During implementation, complete forage utilization jobsheet at the end of the grazing season for NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (528).
- After implementation, provide the following items for review by NRCS:
 - Assessment Sheets with all field notes and locations.

E528N-Improved grazing management through monitoring activities	August 2019	Page 3
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CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

- Written documentation of range professional’s follow-up actions and recommendations.
- Records of pasture/herd in/out dates.
- Completed Trend worksheet.
- Completed forage utilization jobsheet.
- Written modifications to the grazing management and monitoring plan which address the resource concerns identified during the assessments.

NRCS will:

- As needed, provide technical assistance to participant as requested.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) as it relates to implementing this enhancement, including Trend worksheet and forage utilization jobsheet.
- Prior to implementation, provide Ecological Site Descriptions and the ESD map and soil-ecological site correlation as requested for the Range Health Assessment (RHA) or NRCS state criteria guidance for Describing Indicators of Range Health (DIRH).
- After implementation, review assessment evaluation sheets and written recommendations made by range professional.
- After implementation, verify implementation of the grazing management plan by reviewing grazing/herd in/out records, forage utilization jobsheet, trend worksheet, and changes made to the plan to address resource concerns identified during the RHA or DIRH 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

E528N-Improved grazing management through monitoring activities	August 2019	Page 4
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SOUTH DAKOTA (SD) SUPPLEMENT TO CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

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Additional Criteria for SD:

In addition to the criteria specified in the national job sheet E528N, the following additional criteria apply in SD:

- Key grazing areas should be located separately on different management units. The monitoring activity should be located on the predominant ecological site within the field where 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 rangelands provide a minimum of 45 days of growing season recovery between grazing events during the growing season. 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.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Additional Documentation Requirements for SD

In addition to the documentation requirements specified in the national job sheet E528N, 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).
- 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-11, Rangeland Health Evaluation or Rangeland Health Evaluation Sheet from Technical Reference 1734-6 (Version 6 of Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health) completed for the three key areas.
- Complete form SD-ECS-12, Apparent Trend Determination.