



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

E528G (with Montana Supplement)

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).

MT: Grazing management must be implemented under this enhancement for a minimum of 3 years in order to address the identified resource concern(s). If necessary, the first contracted year can be used to obtain the services and receive the products of the qualified range consultant (or equivalent), then, the following 3 years can be contracted for the implementation of the grazing rotation and monitoring.

Criteria

- A written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand will be followed.
- 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.

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- 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.
- 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.
- The narrative 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 approved for a DIA 159, or a non-affiliated consultant with a bachelor or higher level degree in agronomy, 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 approved for DIA 159, or a non-affiliated consultant with a bachelor or higher level degree in agronomy, range science or other closely- related plant science discipline and 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 tool.
 - 2) Conduct assessments on those sites using the Pasture Condition Scoring tool and document the location.
 - 3) Develop a written recommendation including duration and intensity of grazing an/or browsing based on desired health and productivity objectives while addressing adequate cover, litter, and canopy to maintain or improve infiltration, soil health, and reduce soil compaction and other resource concerns identified during the Pasture Condition Score assessment.
- **Current NRCS employees do not qualify as “non-affiliated consultants” regardless of their experience or education.**
- 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 modifications to the grazing management and monitoring plan which address the resource concerns identified from the assessment.

NRCS will:

- As needed, provide additional technical assistance to participant as requested.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS CPS Prescribed Grazing (528) as it relates to implementing this enhancement, including forage utilization job sheet.
- Prior to implementation, provide soils information and/or Forage Suitability Groups, as requested.
- After implementation, review all PCS sheets and written recommendations made by the professional.
- After implementation, review soil test analysis.
- After implementation, verify implementation of 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 to address resource concerns identified during the PCS assessments.

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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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