



**CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY**

**E528Q**

**CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

**Use of body condition scoring for livestock on a monthly basis to keep track of herd health**

**Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing**

**APPLICABLE LAND USE: Crop (Annual and Mixed), Crop (Perennial), Pasture, Range, Forest, Associated Ag Land, Farmstead**

**RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals**

**ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year**

**Enhancement Description**

Body condition scoring (BCS) serves as a useful management tool to monitor livestock performance with respect to current and recent feeding or grazing programs. Body condition scoring is a numeric scoring system, producers can use to consistently evaluate animals' estimated body energy reserves through degree of fatness. This information can be used to adjust nutritional strategies to reach optimal BCS. Since body condition is closely associated with reproductive performance as well as feed efficiency, monitoring body condition can help producers reach production goals and increase the operation's bottom line. Knowledge and understanding of BCS will assist producers to adjust a supplemental feeding program to maintain animal health and nutrition on a-monthly-basis.

**Criteria**

- A written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand will be followed.
- A written plan for maintaining diversity of forage plants to optimize delivery of nutrients to the animals by incorporating the intensity, frequency, timing and duration

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of grazing and/or browsing needed as determined through the planning process with: 1) Clear objectives, 2) A resource inventory including forage inventory, structural improvements and existing resource conditions, 3) Grazing schedule, and 4) All potential contingency plans.

- A written plan to monitor and document Body Condition Scores monthly using Land Grant University Scoring Guidelines.
- Supplemental feed and/or mineral will be balanced with the forage consumption to meet the desired nutritional level for the kind and class of grazing and/or browsing livestock.
- Animals must maintain ideal/Land Grant University recommended BCS for their breed, phase of production, or livestock type. (animals should not be emaciated to thin, or fat to obese).



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## 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 and objectives
  - Location and condition of structural improvements
  - Watering sites with availability, quantity and quantity
  - Forage inventory
  - Forage-animal balance sheet
  - Grazing plan for livestock movement
  - Contingency plan
  - Monitoring plan
- Prior to implementation, develop a written BCS monitoring plan
- During implementation keep a record of livestock movement and BCS of livestock type, breed and phase of production
- During implementation, keep a record of supplemental feeding
- During implementation, take photos of livestock from several representative animals. Photos should be taken of the side with the entire animal in the picture frame
  
- After implementation, provide the following items for review by NRCS:
  - Map of paddocks used
  - Forage-animal balance sheet
  - Records of livestock movement through paddocks
  - BCS monitoring plan with livestock photos
  - Supplemental feeding plan
  - Written modifications to grazing management plan based on results of BCS monitoring and supplemental feeding program

### **NRCS will:**

- As needed, provide technical assistance to participant as requested
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (CPS 528) as it relates to implementing this enhancement

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- Prior to implementation, review the plan provided for livestock movement, BCS monitoring and supplemental feed plan
- After implementation, review the livestock movement plan, BCS monitoring data, and supplemental feed contingency plan (if implemented)
- After implementation, review the modifications to the grazing management plan based on results of BCS monitoring and the supplemental feeding program

**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 \_\_\_\_\_



# OREGON SUPPLEMENT TO CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY E528Q

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### Additional Documentation for Oregon:

- In addition to the documentation requirements specified in the National job sheet E528B the following additional documentation requirements apply in Oregon.
- BCS will be monitored during the grazing season (this may include dormant season grazing if grazed forage is expected to comprise the majority of the diet) and documented in “Monthly Monitoring Record” below.

### Additional information and forms:

[Basics of Body Condition Scoring \(BCS\)](#)

[Influence of Body Condition on Reproductive Performance of Beef Cows Oregon State](#)

[University Body Condition Scoring Sheep](#)

[Purdue University Body Condition Scoring in Farm Animals](#)

### Monitoring Plan worksheet for Body Condition Scoring

Animal Type	Month/Stage of Production	# of Animal Type	# of Animals needed to be Monitored (1 out of 5* or 1 out of 10*)	Ideal Body Condition Score
<i>Cattle</i>	<i>May / Calving</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>5</i>

\*1 out of 5 animals for herds less than 100 animals, or 1 out of every 10 animals for herds greater than 100.



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**Suggested Times for Body Condition Scoring:**

(enter month(s) when this occurs on your operation)

Calving \_\_\_\_\_

Breeding \_\_\_\_\_

2 months prior to weaning \_\_\_\_\_

Weaning \_\_\_\_\_

Late Gestation (90 days prior to calving) \_\_\_\_\_

**Circle months when animals will be monitored:** Include the months from above, as well as any months when grazing will occur:

January	February	March	April	May	June
July	August	September	October	November	December

**Beef BCS Recommendations (from South Dakota State University Extension)**

	Ideal BCS for:		
Stage of Production	Mature Cow	Heifer	Bull
Calving	5	6	-
Breeding Season	5	6	6



