



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



**WASHINGTON SUPPLEMENT TO
CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY**

**CONSERVATION
STEWARDSHIP
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References for Washington Conservation Practice 528 (Prescribed Grazing) Enhancements

To meet criteria for the Prescribed Grazing Enhancements utilize references below.

Prescribed Grazing References:

NRCS Prescribed Grazing Conservation Practice Standard 528 can be found in FOTG Section 4, Practice Standards and Supporting Documents /Prescribed Grazing (AC) (528) folder, <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/details>

Guidance on Conservation Planning for Grazing Lands can be found in chapter 11 of the **USDA NRCS National Range and Pasture Handbook**. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/landuse/rangepasture/?cid=stelprdb1043084>

Prescribed Grazing (528) Design Worksheet/s. This document has several useful worksheets for developing grazing plans. It can be found in the **NRCS Field Office Technical Guide** Section 4, Practice Standards and Supporting Documents /Prescribed Grazing (528) folder. <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/>

Other **Prescribed Grazing (528) documents** (e.g. *Utilization Monitoring Worksheets, Job Sheets (aka Implementation Requirements, IR's) Planning Guides, etc.*) can also be found in the **NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG)**, in Section 4, Practice Standards and Supporting Documents /Prescribed Grazing (528) folder.

Information on **native and non-native grass species critical growth periods** can be found in **Range Technical Note 34**, November 2009, Range Management Guidelines. This can be found in the **NRCS Field Office Technical Guide**: Section 1/Reference Lists/Technical Notes by Discipline/Range folder. <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/details>

Pasture Technical Note No. 105. **The Western Oregon and Washington Pasture Calendar**, A Pacific Northwest Extension Publication PNW 699. Oregon State University, University of Idaho, Washington State University. <https://catalog.extension.oregonstate.edu/sites/catalog/files/project/pdf/pnw699.pdf>



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Forage Analysis

Sampling Feed for Analysis, NDSU

<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/publications/livestock/sampling-feed-for-analysis>

Feeding Beef Cattle I: The Realities of Low-Quality Forages. WSU Ext. EM053E.

https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/2071/2013/07/Llewellyn_Feeding-Beef-Cattle-I_em053e.pdf

Body Condition Scoring:

Information on Body Condition Scoring can be found on the WA Share Point site in the Shared Documents/190 – Ecological Sciences/190-19-Range, Pasture and Hay Land/190-19-Range_Pasture_Forage folder.

Wildlife References and WHEG's:

Use the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife (WDFW) **Priority Habitats and Species (PHS) database** to identify priority wildlife and habitat in your area.

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/phs/>

Inventory/Monitoring References:

Ecological Site Descriptions and **Forage Suitability Groups** can be found in the **NRCS Field Office Technical Guide** <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/details> in Section 2. For planning unit ecological sites and forage suitability groups see bullet below.

Ecological Sites and **Forage Suitability Groups** for planning unit soils can be found by using the **Web Soil Survey** <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>

Interpreting Indicators of Rangeland Health Version 5, Technical Reference 1734-6 (Range Technical Note 103 Rangeland Health Assessment) can be found in the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) in Section 1/Reference Lists/Technical Notes by Discipline/Range folder <https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/details>

Pasture Condition Scoring documents can be found in **NRCS Field Office Technical Guide:** in Section 1/Reference Lists/Technical Notes by Discipline/Pasture folder.

<https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/#/details>