



**CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY**

**E528F**

**CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM**

**Stockpiling cool season forage to improve structure and composition or plant productivity and health**

**Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing**

**APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture; Associated Agricultural Land; Crop (Perennial); Crop (Annual and Mixed)**

**RESOURCE CONCERN: Plants**

**ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year**

**Enhancement Description**

Grazing management employed will stop grazing events of selected paddock(s) to allow pasture forages to grow to maximum vegetative biomass accumulation before the end of the growing season.

**Criteria**

Additions to the current Prescribed Grazing Plan must include:

- A record of designated paddocks and acreages to exclude grazing for a stated specified time period.
- The acreage needed for stockpiled forage will be predetermined.
- Stockpiled acreage will be supplied nutrients according to a land grant university approved soil test to achieve adequate forage growth at the beginning of the stockpiling period.
- Stockpile will be grazed in a manner that maintains specified minimum forage heights in the grazing plan to avoid damage to soil or forage.

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- Do not allow livestock to access previously grazed stockpiled areas when spring regrowth begins until recommended forage heights exist.
- The NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) must be followed on all pasture each year this enhancement is in effect. Note - leaving recommended residual forage heights, even though plants are dormant, are needed for erosion control and wildlife.
- Certification recorded that practice requirements have been met after grazing of stockpiled forages is complete before the new growing season begins.

### Documentation and Implementation Requirements

#### **Participant will:**

- Prior to implementation, develop a prescribed grazing plan including a plan map that delineates where forage stockpiling will occur. Make these materials available to NRCS for review.
- After implementation, make grazing records and photo documentation of stockpiling and level of use available to NRCS.

#### **NRCS will:**

- Prior to implementation, review grazing plan and maps provided by participant.
- During implementation, as requested, assist the participant with adapting the grazing strategy and plan to current conditions.
- After implementation, review records and photos provide to confirm adequate stockpiling and acceptable levels of grazing use.



# CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP 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



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## ALABAMA – E528F Supplement- Stockpiling cool season forage to improve structure and composition or plant productivity and health

### Requirements:

1. Written conservation plan that includes producer goals, objectives and resource concerns. Plan map will show and label all fences, feeding/watering areas, and sensitive areas as well as the paddocks or fields to be stockpiled. Only fescue or a fescue/Orchard grass/clover mix is suitable for this enhancement.
2. Average annual livestock dry matter needs will be balanced with available forage without deficiency for the yearly summary. The Forage/Animal Balance Worksheet will be completed to document.
3. Livestock will be rotated between at least 3 pastures in a particular functional-group (e.g. warm season pastures or cool season pastures) to facilitate prescribed grazing. Fences and water sources should be in place so that trails do not occur, and concentrated livestock areas are minimized. Starting and ending grazing periods will meet the guidelines in the table below. Pastures will be sized and stocked to facilitate meeting the requirements for grazing heights and resting periods. It is anticipated that with a three-pasture rotation that each pasture would rest about 66 percent of the grazing cycle. Additional pastures are preferred and will enable more forage rest.
4. A contingency plan will be developed denoting the use of sacrifice areas for pasture management during drought or other weather-related events. These areas will be labeled on the conservation plan map.
5. Stockpiling may be utilized on 25-33% of the total pasture.
  - The area should be uniformly grazed or mowed by September 1 and livestock excluded.
  - Nutrients will be applied according to soil test recommendations (typically 60 lbs N/ac plus P, K, and lime, if needed). Urea forms of N should be avoided unless applied immediately before a rain.
  - Defer grazing until Dec.1
  - Estimate the amount of forage available using a grazing stick or other method. Document with photographs.
  - Strip or rotationally graze to extend the grazing period of stockpiled forage. Polywire is an excellent tool for managing grazing.
  - Grazing period is typically early December through January
  - Do not allow livestock to access regrowth until minimum forage heights exist
6. Maintain grazing records to include pasture or field number, acres, forage type, animal type and number, forage height in and out-with dates.

Grazing will be managed according to the Prescribed Grazing (528) Standard.

The days of rest needed for plant recovery and regrowth range from 7 to 45 days, depending on the forage species (see below table). Stocking rates and growing conditions can also affect the forage growth. Grazing systems should be designed to meet the rest requirements of a specific forage as well as the needs of the livestock. For example, by using four pastures with 14 days of grazing per pasture, the grazing cycle is 56 days and each pasture rests 75% of the time or 42 days.

### FORAGE GUIDELINES FOR PRESCRIBED GRAZING SYSTEMS

Common Forages	Begin Grazing (in)	End Grazing (in)	Usual days of Rest
Alfalfa grazing types	10	4	35 - 40
Bahiagrass	6	2	10 - 20
Bermudagrass common	5	2	7 - 10
Bermudagrass hybrid	6	3	7 - 10

Big Bluestem	18	10	30 - 45
Dallis grass	6	3	7 - 15
Eastern Gama grass	15	8	30 - 45
Tall Fescue	6	3	15 - 30
Indiangrass	12	6	30 - 40
Orchard grass	8	3	15 - 30
Switchgrass	18	10	30 - 45

## Grazing Management Records

Keeping accurate records is a continual and critical process in effective pasture and livestock management.

Pasture ID		Pasture acres	Forage type			
Soil test date		Lime/ Fertilizer rate	Lime/ Fertilizer type	Date applied		
Livestock		Date in	Forage height	Date out	Forage height	Notes (fertilizer applied)
Type	Number					

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