

Langlade Success from the Field

Pasture Inter-Seeding and Rotational Grazing System: A Recipe for Improved Soil Health

Background

A Rainbow's End Farm is a third generation, 66-acre, Krause Farm. First Anton, then Roderick and presently Margaret Krause owns the farm. It is located east of Antigo, Wisconsin, in Langlade County. The farm consists of 27 acres for pasturing livestock, 7 acres for crops and 26 acres of woodlands. Horses, chickens, Heritage pigs and now Hereford beef are raised on the farm. Margaret explains, "In 2016, Peggy Winter, NRCS district conservationist, introduced me to rotational grazing. Her ideas matched my goals and passion to reduce my carbon footprint. Peggy's information, encouragement, enthusiasm and expertise have been invaluable to my operation; thank you."

Program Successes

"As a one person operation relying on family and friends to help, I am looking for options to improve production on my farm and manage a healthy beef herd, while also reducing labor," said Margaret. Beginning conversations and meetings with NRCS involved converting two existing crop fields and an over-grazed pasture into an effective rotational grazing system. "With an initial goal of organic certification, Margaret had relaxed on her seeding and fertilization plans, there was compaction and very low quality and quantity of forage in the over-grazed and over-stocked pasture, soils tests were expired and there was limited watering options for the cattle," explained Peggy. With some help, Margaret installed her own fence and surface waterline systems and the beef herd started using the system in late summer 2017. Land stewardship has always been a goal on the farm, so soil sampling and fertility have always been monitored. In spring 2018, Margaret worked with NRCS to fertilize and no-till plant into two of her pasture areas. There are also plans to install a winter watering facility so that livestock have access to water year-round without garden hoses freezing while trying to supply water using the current system. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has provided financial assistance for projects on this farm. Margaret is also working with the Langlade County Land Conservation Department on some other upgrades to her farming operation. "Working on restoring soil nutrient levels, adding forage diversity and rotating animals using a managed intensive grazing system is a recipe for improved soil health," explained Peggy.



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Future Plans

Margaret attends pasture walks and grazing conferences trying to gain more knowledge and understanding of prescribed grazing, soil health, out-wintering and more. Margaret's short term goal is to pre-set bales and winter graze so she can decrease more farm labor and utilize the manure in the pasture year-round.



A no-till seeder was used to plant seed in pastures at A Rainbow's End Farm in Antigo, Wisconsin.



Walking and talking pasture soil sampling, forage species and seeding options.

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