Assistance to 
Ranchers and Pastureland Operators

Concerned with:
Providing water to your livestock in remote areas? Addressing weeds and invasive plants? Improving soil quality to grow nutritious forage? The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service can help!

INTRODUCTION
California has some of the most beautiful and diverse rangelands in the nation: from alpine meadows to sage steppe and from coastal prairie to Mediterranean annual grasses. Ranchers in all of these settings work hard to balance the needs of livestock with the capability of the ecosystem to healthfully sustain both animals and the landscape for the long term.

Professional NRCS rangeland specialists are available to work with ranchers to capture this balancing act in a tailored grazing management plan. The plan begins with an inventory of water sources, soil types, forage species/production, fencing, and other resource issues. Guided by the goals of the rancher, a flexible management strategy is developed to enhance ranch resources. A monitoring and contingency plan will also be provided.

GETTING STARTED...
Go to the Office
We have 54 across the state. The NRCS will work with you to develop a conservation plan tailored to help you improve rangeland conditions on your property. This voluntary plan will be based on your priorities and solid science. The plan may also be the basis to apply for financial assistance.

Financial Assistance
The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is a voluntary program widely used by ranchers and pastureland operators in California. EQIP shares with participants the cost of conservation practices (see sidebar on back). The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) offers additional opportunities for those already meeting a baseline level of stewardship.

Apply
Any time during the year. Eligible projects will be evaluated, prioritized and selected for funding as budget allocations permit.
A grazing plan helps ranchers design livestock movement patterns to address objectives. Above are prime examples of well-managed rangeland.

**About NRCS, FSA and RMA**

In more than 80 years of helping farmers, ranchers and private forestland owners, NRCS has assembled technical standards (like those in the sidebar at right) to address natural resource concerns. The USDA’s Farm Services Agency (FSA) and Risk Management Agency (RMA) provide other critical resources such as farm loans, crop insurance and disaster assistance.

For more information on NRCS Farm Bill conservation programs, visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/ca/programs/

**5 Steps to NRCS Assistance**

1. **Planning:** Visit your local NRCS field office to discuss your goals and work with staff on a conservation plan.
2. **Application:** With the help of NRCS, complete an application for financial assistance programs.
3. **Eligibility:** Find out if you’re eligible for NRCS’ variety of financial assistance programs.
4. **Ranking:** NRCS ranks applications according to local resource concerns.
5. **Implementing:** Put conservation to work by signing a contract and implementing conservation practices.

**HERBACEOUS WEED CONTROL**

Utilize mechanical, manual, chemical or biological methods to reduce noxious or invasive species from rangelands to improve forage quality, enhance species composition, or improve habitat.

**BRUSH MANAGEMENT**

Utilize mechanical, manual, chemical or biological methods to reduce invasive woody species from rangelands to improve species composition or wildlife habitat.

**FENCE**

Construct barbed, smooth, electric or woven wire fence to improve livestock distribution or control access to certain sensitive areas. Once constructed the fence is used for implementation of a grazing management system.

**WATER FACILITY**

Provides safe, clean drinking water for livestock or wildlife. Usually done in conjunction with livestock well, spring development and includes pipeline, storage tank, and trough.

**PRESCRIBED GRAZING**

Manage the harvest of vegetation with grazing or browsing animals to enhance rangeland health, pasture condition, and/or the condition of the grazing animal.

**ACCESS CONTROL**

A temporary or permanent enclosure constructed to restrict access to sensitive areas. Achieve the desired resource conditions through monitoring changes post-enclosure construction. Enclosure may be removed if resource objectives are met.

NRCS offers technical and financial assistance on conservation practices for healthy ranching. Here are available conservation practices ranches throughout California:

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