

**Animal Enhancement Activity – ANM59 - Grazing management to improve Sage grouse habitat**



**Enhancement Description**

Implement a grazing management plan that will allow for rest periods to provide adequate residue for nesting cover and increase diversity of vegetative structure to benefit a variety of wildlife species.

**Land Use Applicability**

Pastureland, Rangeland

**Benefits**

Wildlife habitat can be greatly improved through proper grazing management. Proper grazing management is essential to healthy wildlife populations because plants supply food and cover for nesting, loafing, roosting, travel and escape from predators and adverse weather. Planned grazing systems will provide adequate cover for sage grouse and can be implemented to increase residual cover of perennial grasses and forbs to improve sage-grouse nesting and early brood rearing success. Increased residual cover will also improve plant litter cover over the soil surface. Plant litter facilitates better moisture infiltration and produces more vegetative cover for nesting grouse as well as increased forbs for brood habitat. Grazing systems can also decrease the time anyone pasture is exposed to grazing animals and people reducing overall disturbance of sage grouse.

**Conditions Where Enhancement Applies**

This enhancement applies to all pasture and range land use acres.

**Criteria**

1. Defer 20 percent of the grazing land each year within the habitat area for year one and continuing through the nesting season in year two.
  - a. The same pasture cannot be deferred in consecutive years unless it is the only pasture within the sage grouse habitat area.
2. Develop and implement a written grazing management plan that identifies the following:
  - a. wildlife management objectives for grazing land,
  - b. targeted wildlife species,
  - c. nesting dates,
  - d. the location and number of acres to be deferred each year,
  - e. a schedule for the year of deferment,
  - f. stocking rates that will allow proper forage utilization while maintaining proper plant heights that provide food and shelter for wildlife and maintain plant health.
  - g. The grazing plan must be developed in accordance with NRCS practice standard (528) Prescribed grazing to ensure that stocking rate is in balance with forage supply, season of use is rotated to ensure plants have adequate reproduction



opportunity, and rangeland is monitored to inform of adaptive management.

### **Adoption Requirements**

This enhancement is considered adopted when a grazing management plan targeting sage grouse has been written and 20 percent of the grazing land is avoided during the nesting season each year as prescribed.

### **Documentation Requirements**

1. A schedule of when grazing activities occurred documenting that grazing activities were deferred on a minimum of 20 percent of the habitat.
2. A map showing the acreage where these activities are applied.
3. A written grazing plan as described in criteria g above and actual use records.

### **References**

Beck, J.L., and D.L. Mitchell. 2000. Influences of livestock grazing on sage grouse habitat. *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 28:993-1002.

Boyd, C.S., J.L. Beck, and J.A. Tanaka. 2014. Livestock grazing and sage-grouse habitat: impacts and opportunities. *Journal of Rangeland Applications* 1:58-77.

Nistler, C. M., J. Boren and D. Rollins. 2006. Proceedings – Symposia: Prescribed Livestock Grazing to Enhance Wildlife Habitat. 112 pages. Society for Range Management.

NRCS, FWS. 2010. Conference Report for sage grouse.

[http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/UT/SG\\_Conference\\_Report\\_Final\(508Compliant\).pdf](http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/UT/SG_Conference_Report_Final(508Compliant).pdf)

Sant, E.D., G.E. Simonds, R.D. Ramsey, and R.T. Larsen. 2014. Assessment of sagebrush cover using remote sensing at multiple spatial and temporal scales. *Ecological Indicators* 43:297-305.

USDA-NRCS. 2010. Conservation Practice Standard: Prescribed Grazing-Code 528.