Plant Enhancement Activity – PLT02 – Monitoring key grazing areas to improve grazing management

Enhancement Description
Adjust grazing management based on monitoring data. Monitor key grazing areas to determine if current grazing management is meeting management goals and objectives. A key grazing area is a small area of a grazed field that is identified as being representative of the entire field.

Land Use Applicability
Pastureland, Rangeland, Forestland

Benefits
Proper grazing management will maintain and improve vegetation and soil conditions, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat. Monitoring can be utilized to determine if current grazing management actions are having the desired effect on natural resources. Monitoring enables managers to make decisions and adjust management strategies as needed.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies
This enhancement applies to all acres in the operation for the selected land use.

Criteria
1. Key grazing areas will be established for each grazed field
2. Each key grazing area will be monitored based on the frequency of grazing once established (i.e., more than annually if grazed multiple time per year)
3. Monitoring will include a photo for each pasture of key grazing area and use of one or more of the following techniques:
   a. Plant productivity determinations
   b. Measurements of key forage plant heights (before and after grazing) at least once per period
   c. Locally applicable methods such as those described in "Monitoring for Grasslands, Shrublands and Savanna Ecosystems" available at http://jornada.nmsu.edu/monit-assess/manuals/monitoring .
4. Each grazed field will follow a written grazing plan which meets NRCS requirements

Adoption Requirements
This enhancement is considered adopted when there is documentation that monitoring data has been collected and used to adjust the objectives in a grazing management plan.

Documentation Requirements

1. A written grazing plan which meets NRCS requirements,
2. A map showing the location of each key grazing area,
3. Photographs from the fixed photo location points for each monitoring time,
4. Written documentation of the monitoring data collected, and
5. Written documentation of how monitoring data was used to adjust grazing management plans including modifications and objectives.

References

BLM Technical Reference 1734-3. 1999. Utilization Studies and Residual Measurements. Interagency Technical Reference.

BLM Technical Reference 1734-4. 1999. Sampling Vegetation Attributes. Interagency Technical Reference.

Herrick, J. E., J.W. Van Zee, K.M. Havstad, L.M. Burkett and W.G. Whitford. 2005. Monitoring Manuel for Grassland, Shrubland, and Savanna Ecosystems, Vol II. 2005. USDA-ARS Jornada Experimental Range. http://usda-ars.nmsu.edu/monit_assess/monitoring.php

Rayburn, E. B. (editor). 2007. Forage Utilization for Pasture Based Livestock Production. NRAES – Book 173; Chapter 1 – Assessing Species Composition and Forage Quality, Chapter 2 – Assessing Forage Mass and Forage Budgeting. PALS Publishing, Ithaca, New York.