

Soil Quality Enhancement Activity – SQL14 –Integrate grazing into crop and forest systems



Enhancement Description

This enhancement integrates of grazing into land use systems where they are absent.

Land Use Applicability

Cropland, Forestland

Benefits

Grazing can be beneficial when introduced into forest or cropping systems. Carefully planned grazing integration can introduce many benefits:

1. In cropping systems, grazing can help to remove excess residue, stimulate secondary plant growth, and help to control herbicide-resistant weed species.
2. In forest systems, grazing can encourage plant diversity, reduce rank plant growth, and help control invasive species.
3. In both forest and crop systems, grazing can stimulate microbial diversity in soil systems and improve overall soil health.

Conditions Where Enhancement Applies

This enhancement applies to all crop or forest land use acres not currently grazed.

Criteria

Implement the following:

1. Develop a prescribed grazing plan. The plan must be approved by both the producer and NRCS conservationist.
 - a. The prescribed grazing plan must include the following:
 - i. Clearly stated goals and objectives,
 - ii. Resource inventory that identifies existing resource conditions and concerns; ecological site or forage suitability group; identifies opportunities to enhance resource conditions; location and condition of structural improvements
 - iii. Forage inventory
 - iv. Forage-Animal balance
 - v. Periods of grazing and/or browsing, deferment, rest, and other treatment activities for each management unit
 - vi. Contingency plan
 - vii. Monitoring plan
 - viii. Additional criteria to include:
 1. Manage grazing to maintain adequate vegetative cover on (sensitive areas, riparian’s, wetlands, and other habitats of concerns,)
 2. For cropping systems, only high residue crops can be grazed



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3. Grazing restrictions as identified by other governmental programs and laws must be followed
2. Apply the recommendations of the prescribed grazing plan

Adoption Requirements

This enhancement is considered adopted when the selected grazing species are introduced to the land use acre.

Documentation Requirements

1. Copy of the prescribed grazing plan
2. Recordation of all grazing activities including:
 - a. Annual forage inventory,
 - b. Annual forage-animal balance,
 - c. Periods of grazing and/or browsing, deferment, rest, and other treatment activities for each management unit,
 - d. How adequate vegetative cover was maintained on sensitive areas, riparian areas, wetlands, and other habitats of concerns, and
 - e. How other grazing restrictions, as identified by other governmental programs and laws, were followed.

References

Barnes, R.F., D.A. Miller and C.J. Nelson. 1995. Forages, The Science of Grassland Agriculture, 5th Ed. Iowa State University Press, Ames, IA.

Holechek, J.L., R.D. Pieper and C.H. Herbel. 2000. Range Management Principles and Practices. 5th Edition. Prentice Hall, NJ.

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Valentine, J.F. 2001. Grazing Management. Academic Press, San Diego, CA