

good
Grazing
makes
good **\$ense**

2021

**USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service**





Ivan N. Dozier

ILLINOIS STATE CONSERVATIONIST

I must admit that last year was an unexpected and undesirable chain of events I hope we never have to repeat. Onward and into 2021! For this year's planner, we're

sharing some spectacular photographs taken by some of our most progressive, successful, and innovative graziers. Most of these livestock producers we've previously profiled in detail to share steps they've taken and lessons they've learned along their journey to productive and profitable grazing methods. My hope is that other livestock owners will follow their steps—or reach out and begin asking questions—to launch their own journey towards good grazing.

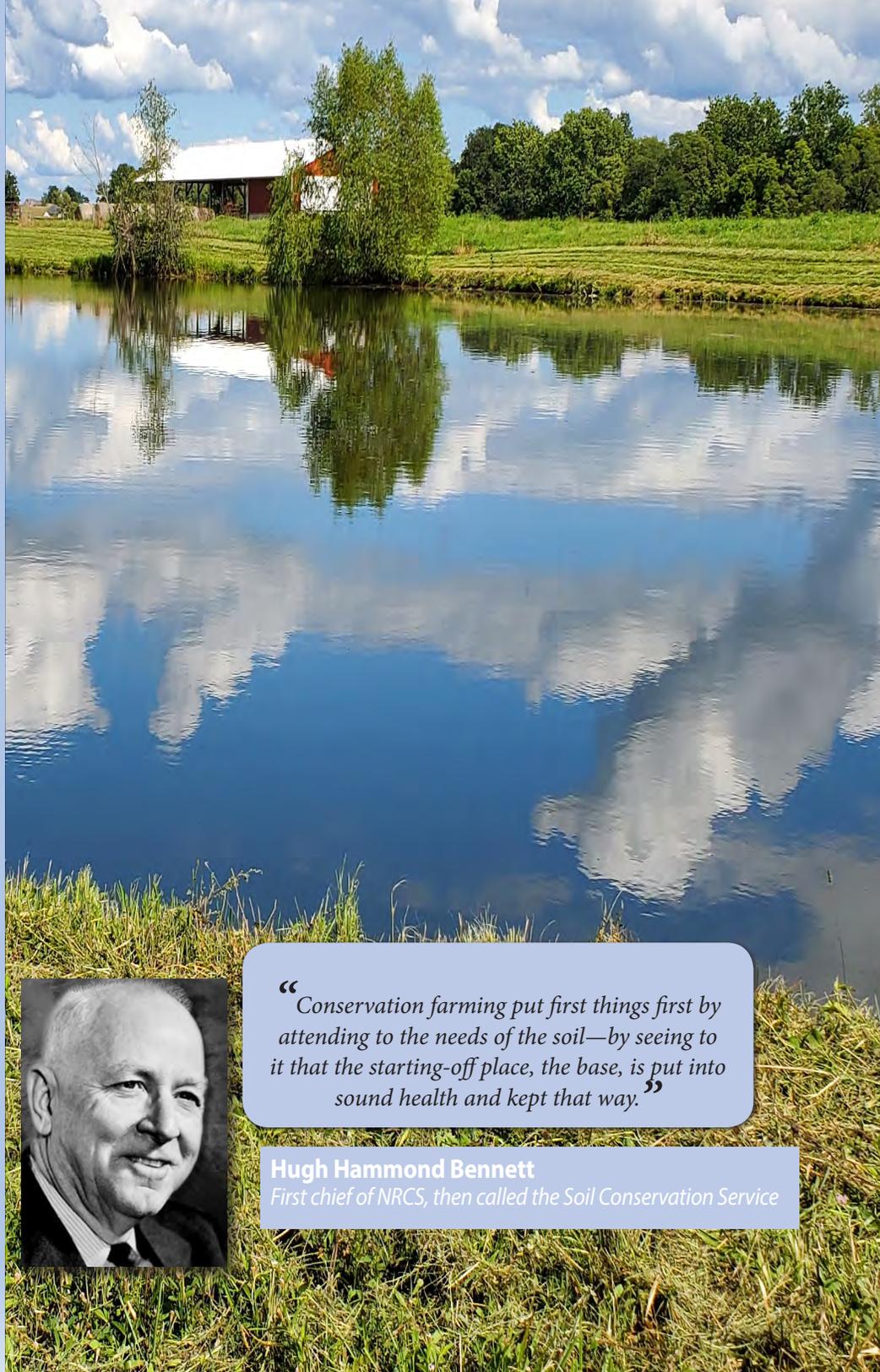
I'm going to define some terms quickly. They may be terms you know well, or they may still be a little fuzzy. One term, **Regenerative Agriculture**, is one we've seen frequently the last few years. The concept here is to give back to the field, pasture, Earth, MORE than we take out. Beginning practices include cover crops, reduced tillage, rotating crops, anything that improves soil health and moves away from reliance on synthetic fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and factory farming.

For farmers with livestock—or farmers who want to reintroduce livestock to their operation—the other term is **Regenerative Grazing**. This is a principal-driven ag practice of building soil health by managing livestock on perennial and annual forages, and doing it in a way that supports human and ecosystem health, farm profitability, and community and food system resilience.

The conservation grazing operators featured this year are special people and families who have gone “all in” when it comes to grass, pasture, and soil health and all the amazing biology they create above and below ground. Enjoy the beautiful pictures these families captured on the land they care for, the animals they nurture.

You can accomplish the same on your land if you're ready. When you are, reach out to graziers like these, or your own local innovators, helpful grazing groups, soil and water conservation districts, and of course, your local NRCS team members. We all know what incredible things can happen on grasslands. And we're all here to help you make it happen where you are.

Ivan Dozier, State Conservationist
NRCS Illinois



“*Conservation farming put first things first by attending to the needs of the soil—by seeing to it that the starting-off place, the base, is put into sound health and kept that way.*”

Hugh Hammond Bennett
First chief of NRCS, then called the Soil Conservation Service

“Our pastures seem to improve every year with a diversity of plants above ground and a diversity of microbes underground”.



**Jim Burrus,
Morgan County, IL**



JANUARY

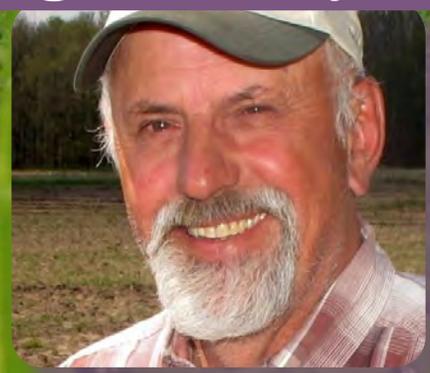
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In-person American AFGC 2021 Annual Conference Hyatt Regency Savannah, GA Jan. 3-6			ZOOM Mtg: 2021 Nat'l GLCI Discussion Jan. 7 @ 12-1 Livestock; 1-2 Crops		New Years Day																																																																																					
			VIRTUAL Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism, & Organic Conference (ISCAOC) Jan. 6-8 2021 www.specialtygrowers.org/iscc2021																																																																																							
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VIRTUAL American AFGC 2021 Annual Conference https://www.afgc.org Jan. 11-12																																																																																										
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Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday																																																																																										
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		VIRTUAL Pastures Please!! Equine Meeting — Jan. 26 5:30-7:30 pm	VIRTUAL American Sheep Industry Assn. 2021 Convention Jan. 28-29																																																																																							
		VIRTUAL Driftless Region Beef Conference Jan. 26-28 \$15 www.aep.iastate.edu/beef																																																																																								
31						<p>Read complete NRCS profile with details on the Jim Burrus operation</p> 																																																																																				



“Once I ran the numbers, adding annuals and cover crops for my grazing operation was a no brainer. I frost seed red clover into standing wheat in late winter, graze 1 animal unit per acre for 75 days (mid-July thru September), gaining 3 lbs. per day. I calculate my value of direct marketing, cost of cover crop, N credit (15 months of clover plus manure) for next row crop... net \$497 per acre. Following corn, I fly on cereal rye, graze 1 animal unit per acre for 60-90 days, gaining 1.7 lbs. per day. I net \$166-\$273 per acre.”

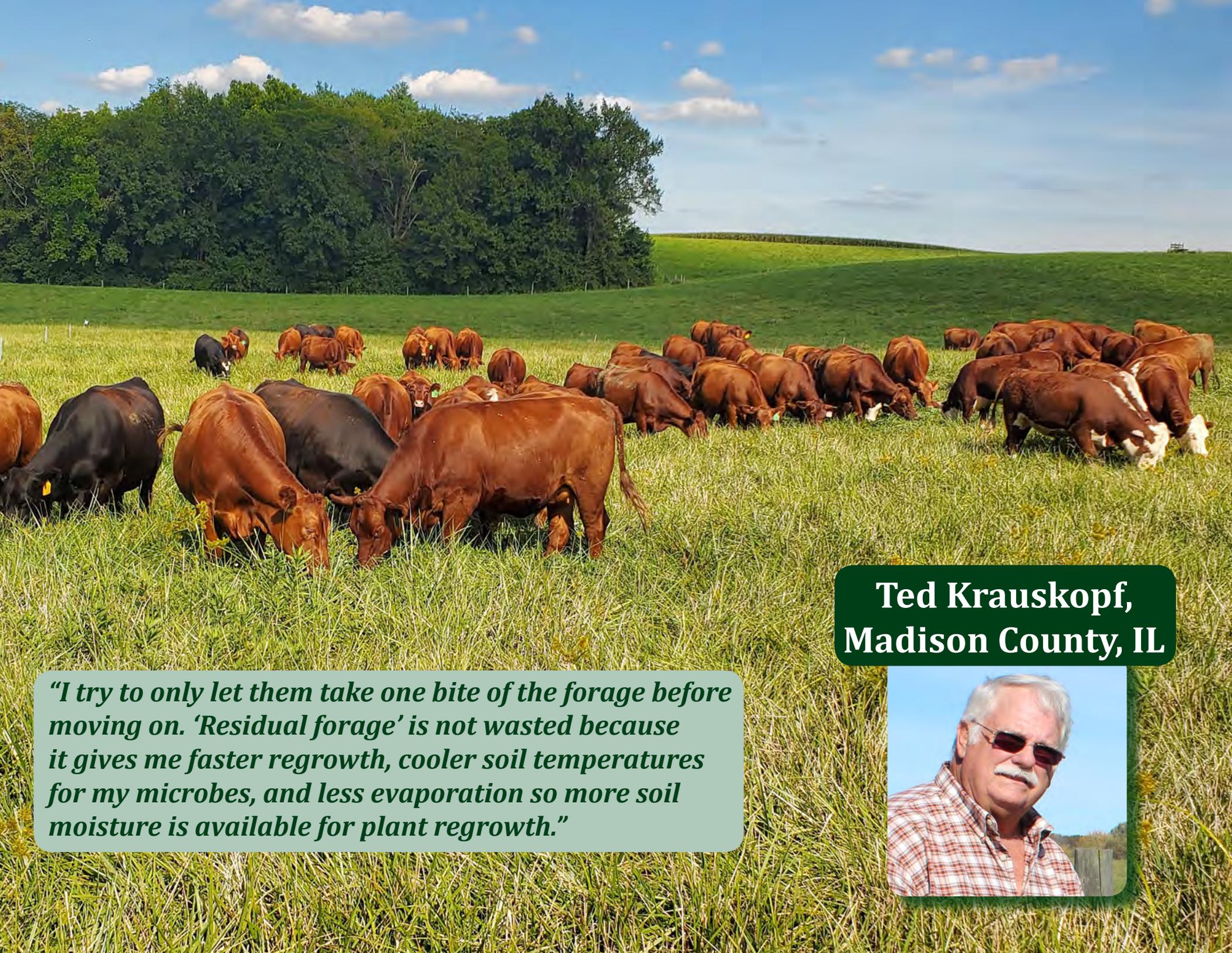


**Dave Bishop,
Logan County, IL**



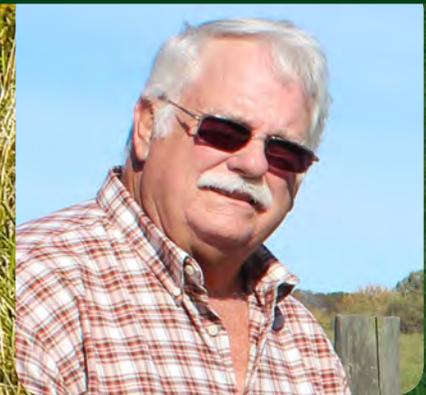
FEBRUARY

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	Complete FROST SEEDING/OVER SEEDING throughout February.		2021 National Cattle Beef Assn Conference Nashville, TN Feb. 3-5																																																																																																																				
	VIRTUAL NACD 2021 Annual Convention \$50 www.events.bizabo.com/NACD/home Feb. 1-10																																																																																																																						
		Groundhog Day		Mgt. Intensive Grazing - The Next Step Feb. 4-5, Jackson, MS																																																																																																																			
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		VIRTUAL 2021 Dudley Smith Field Day @ 9-12 Livestock Session, 1-3pm Crop Session				Missed the EQIP Jan. 8 deadline? No problem. Give NRCS a call.																																																																																																																	
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				Regenerative Grazing Fundamentals for Farmers- Feb. 18 9-10:30 am. ISAP \$30																																																																																																																			
	VIRTUAL 2021 SRM Annual Mtg. New Frontiers Feb. 15-18 https://annualmeeting2021.rangelands.org																																																																																																																						
Valentine's Day	President's Day																																																																																																																						
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		VIRTUAL 37th Annual SW Missouri Spring Forage Conference Feb. 23-24 https://springforageconference.com																																																																																																																					
	VIRTUAL 2021 Growing Stronger: Collaborative Conference Organic & Sustainable Farming Ag Feb. 22-27																																																																																																																						
				2021 Alfalfa & Stored Forage Conference Feb. 25																																																																																																																			
	2021 Novel Tall Fescue Renovation Worskhop Feb. 23-25.																																																																																																																						
28	Read complete NRCS profile with details on Dave Bishop's operation 				<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">January 2021</th> <th colspan="7">March 2021</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td> <td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td> <td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td> <td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td> <td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td> <td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	January 2021							March 2021							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S						1	2			1	2	3	4	5	6	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30	31				31														
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**Ted Krauskopf,
Madison County, IL**

“I try to only let them take one bite of the forage before moving on. ‘Residual forage’ is not wasted because it gives me faster regrowth, cooler soil temperatures for my microbes, and less evaporation so more soil moisture is available for plant regrowth.”



MARCH

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	Begin to fertilize cool-season pastures & forages as needed.			VIRTUAL 2021 Indiana Small Farm Conference Mar. 4-6, \$35, www.purdue.edu/sfc																																												
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		Mardis Gras	Ash Wednesday		Inventory fences, water systems; perform repairs.																																											
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Daylight Saving Time			St. Patrick's Day	Noval Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop , Athens, GA, Mar. 18, 8:30-5pm \$85 https://grasslandrenewal/		First Day of Spring																																										
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		Noval Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop Mt. Vernon, MO, Mar. 23, 8:30-5pm \$85 https://grasslandrenewal/		Noval Tall Fescue Renovation Workshop , Lexington, KY, Mar. 25, 8:30-5pm \$85 https://grasslandrenewal/																																												
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Palm Sunday		Both EQIP & CSP can help you meet your grazing goals.		Read complete NRCS profile with details on Ted's operation		<p>April 2021</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td></tr> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
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“My philosophy is pretty simple—sustain the family farm, make a good living, and protect this piece of the Earth.”



Dan Dietrich
Ogle County, IL



APRIL

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<p>March 2021</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td></tr> <tr><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td></tr> <tr><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31				<p>Read complete NRCS profile with details on Dan's operation</p> 		<p>Prepare drought plan before the grazing season starts.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>April Fool's Day</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Good Friday</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Start tracking rainfall for your grazing season.</p>							
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<p>4</p> <p>Easter Sunday</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Rotate herds quickly in Spring when forage grows fast. Spray to control winter annual weeds.</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p> <p>So. IL Sheep & Craft Festival, Apr. 10, 9-5pm, Monroe Co. Fairgrounds</p>																																																	
<p>11</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Need a warm-season grass burn to control invasives?</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>																																																	
<p>18</p> <p>Palm Sunday</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Passover Begins</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Earth Day!</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>																																																	
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“I wanted to combine productive soils on prime farmland with livestock and cover crops. I plant summer annuals and cover crops to increase the amount of feed my herd can graze throughout the summer.”

**Doug Hanson,
Iroquois County, IL**



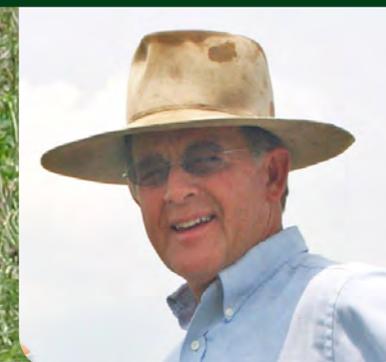
MAY

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<p>April 2021</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td></tr> <tr><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td></tr> <tr><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td></tr> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30		<p>June 2021</p> <table border="1"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	S	M	T	W	T	F	S				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				<p>Read complete NRCS profile with details on Doug's operation</p> 				<p>1</p> <p>Control seed heads for better forage quality.</p> <p>May Day</p>
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<p>2</p> <p>Have you prepared that drought plan yet?</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Cinco De Mayo</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>	<p>8</p>																																																																																					
<p>9</p> <p>Mother's Day</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Get both technical & financial help from NRCS programs.</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Armed Forces Day</p>																																																																																					
<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Did you know you can sign up for EQIP any time...?</p>	<p>21</p>	<p>22</p>																																																																																					
<p>23</p> <p>30</p>	<p>24</p> <p>31</p> <p>Memorial Day</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>																																																																																					

“My philosophy is a holistic one because to me, everything is of equal importance—the cattle, the grass, the weeds, the soil, the wildlife, the water, the weather. Every aspect is dependent on another. All are equal and all are necessary.”



Ron Freeman
Morgan County, IL



JUNE

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Read complete NRCS profile with details on Ron's operation 	1	2	3	4	5																																																																																																																		
	Never too early to get that drought plan started...		Move animals based on plant height NOT calendar dates!																																																																																																																				
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			Complete summer annual seeding.																																																																																																																				
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	Flag Day		Do you need to implement that drought plan...?																																																																																																																				
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National Forage Week																																																																																																																							
Father's Day		First Day of Summer	Thistles are best controlled @ boot stage.																																																																																																																				
27	28	29	30	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">May 2021</th> <th colspan="7">July 2021</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td> <td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td> <td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td> <td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td> <td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		May 2021							July 2021							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1						1	2	3	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	30	31													
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	Watch grazing heights & rest periods carefully!																																																																																																																						



“Controlled or intensively managing grazing land benefits the environment, our soils, our animals, and our farms’ financial well being, which allows my family and farm to grow and prosper. This is true even as we morph from dairy to a cow/calf operation and beyond. For 27 years, grazing has been the integral gear in our operation and will continue to be for the foreseeable future!”

**Dave Suprenaut
Kankakee County, IL**



July

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Independence Day																																																																																										
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inventory rainfall totals - Inventory pasture condition -- are plants stressed? - Time to implement your drought plan? 																																																																																								
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<p>Check status of AISWCD Summer Conference & Annual Meeting @ www.aiswcd.org</p>																																																																																										

- Graze summer annuals at 18-24" height
- Watch pasture for weeds & invasives
- Evaluate shade/water needs & fertility
- Slow rotation & lengthen rest periods

- Inventory rainfall totals
- Inventory pasture condition -- are plants stressed?
- Time to implement your drought plan?

Have you asked about EQIP yet?
What are you waiting for?



**Trevor Toland
McDonough County, IL**

“If you want an even graze and healthy soil and forage going forward, then find the density that is right to achieve that, given the season and conditions. Good grazing is really all about density!”



August

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Summer Seeding Dates Begin!																																																																																																							
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				Illinois State Fair Aug. 12-22, 2021 Springfield, IL www.2illinois.gov/statefair																																																																																																			
Apply fertilizer to stockpile tall fescue and other cool-season grass for winter grazing.																																																																																																							
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Illinois State Fair Ends			Aren't you glad you prepared a Drought Plan.....?!		DuQuoin State Fair Aug. 27-Sept. 6, 2021 DuQuoin, IL																																																																																																		
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DuQuoin State Fair Aug. 27-Sept. 6, 2021 DuQuoin, IL			2021 Farm Progress Show - Decatur, IL - LIVE Event!																																																																																																				
- Inventory winter feed supplies			- Rest legumes & cool-season grasses 30 days before first frost																																																																																																				



“Grazing green leaf corn ahead of tassel with radishes annual clover and kale...I would skip the kale and clover if I ever did this again. If the corn is not grazed off past the growing point, it will recover. I did not have adequate moisture for good regrowth so I turned cows and calves in to clean up then reseeded with cereal rye for spring.”

Jennifer & Jeff Neice
Knox County, IL



September

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	Labor Day	Beware of early frost dates for prussic acid in summer annuals.																																																																																															
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Patriot Day																																																																																																	
Grandparent's Day			Rest warm-season grasses thru mid-October.																																																																																														
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	Don't put it off--call NRCS & develop your Grazing Plan.		First Day of Autumn																																																																																														
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		- Allow animals to graze cornstalks; allow rest period for pastures - Try strip grazing the stalks to reduce trampling - Conduct annual soil tests																																																																																															
					Read complete NRCS profile with details on Jeff Neice's operation 																																																																																												



**Travis Stockstill
Montgomery County, IL**

“Since I’ve had all my paddocks set up, I’ve increased my grass production by allowing fields to be grazed then rested. This has also helped with parasites for the goats. I allow the goats in and follow up with cows. The field of rye was hay but by planting teff for hay and using rye to graze, I get more use of the ground but at an additional cost, which I feel is worth it.”



October

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				Check your EQIP or CSP contract to ensure you've met installation deadlines & are on schedule.																																																																																						
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31					Read complete NRCS profile with details on Stock-sill's operation																																																																																					
Halloween																																																																																										

Rotational grazing definitely makes more grass and more pounds of beef. Since moving to a more intense rotational grazing system, we have practically eliminated parasite problems. With rotational grazing, we have significantly reduced “brown” areas--cow paths, high traffic, erosion--in our pastures.

Dennis & Maggie Guenzler
JoDavie County, IL



November

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		All Saints Day			Thinking about more changes for your pastures? Give NRCS a call & get started for 2022.																																																																																																															
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Daylight Saving Time Ends		Election Day		Veteran's Day																																																																																																																
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- Test forages & hay before feeding; improves winter feeding efficiency - Separate animals by nutritional needs - lactating or gestating stock need your BEST forages																																																																																																																				
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	Monitor body condition score trends of your herds.			Thanksgiving Day																																																																																																																
28	29	30			<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">October 2021</th> <th colspan="7">December 2021</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td> <td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td> <td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td> <td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td> <td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>31</td><td></td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		October 2021							December 2021							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S						1	2				1	2	3	4	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	26	27	28	29	30	31						31							
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First Sunday of Advent																																																																																																																				

“Adapt is the most important part of Adaptive Grazing. Never be afraid to try something new or to go against the grain. It takes less than 30 minutes a day to rotate cows to fresh pasture with portable fencing. At \$20.00 per hour for your time, you’re doubling your land for \$3,650.00 per year.”



**Jennifer & Jeff Neice
Knox County, IL**



December

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<p>Start planning ahead for next year's pastures. Review and evaluate your 2020-2021 grazing records.</p>																																																							
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<p>December 6-9, 2021, Myrtle Beach, SC - 8th Nat'l Grazing Lands Conference</p>																																																							
		<p>Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day</p>																																																					
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<p>Once winter annuals & stalks are grazed, begin to graze stockpiled forages. Graze all cool-season grasses ahead of Tall Fescue.</p>																																																							
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		<p>First Day of Winter</p>			<p>Christmas Eve</p>	<p>Christmas Day</p>																																																	
<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>New Year's Eve</p>																																																	
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Use A Systems Approach — A guide to grass, grazing, and good management.

Grazing systems range from continuous use of one pasture over a long period of time, to intense grazing of small areas for short periods of time. There are trade-offs for every system, and you'll have to decide which system works best for your operation. You may want to combine concepts and develop a system that works into your time schedule, livestock operation and available pasture.

Continuous grazing is a one pasture system where livestock are left to graze in a large area for the entire season.

Advantages:

- Requires least labor & time.
- Capital costs are minimal.
- Animals can eat the best plants if not overstocked.

Disadvantages:

- Lower stocking rate & less pounds produced per acre.
- Lower forage quality & yields.
- Uneven pasture use.
- Weeds and brush may be a problem.
- Both overgrazing and under grazing can occur in the same pasture more easily because of a lack of options to move livestock.
- Animal manure is distributed unevenly.



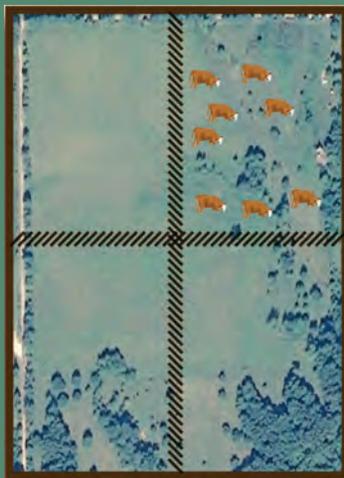
Rotational grazing is a system with more than one pasture in which livestock are moved, usually on a calendar schedule.

Advantages:

- Can increase forage production & condition of pasture over a continuous system.
- Allows pastures to rest & allows for regrowth.
- Can provide for longer grazing season, reducing winter feed.
- More even distribution of manure throughout the paddocks.

Disadvantages:

- Fencing costs & water supply establishment can be higher than in continuous systems.
- Although forage production is increased over continuous grazing, it is not as high as intensive grazing systems.



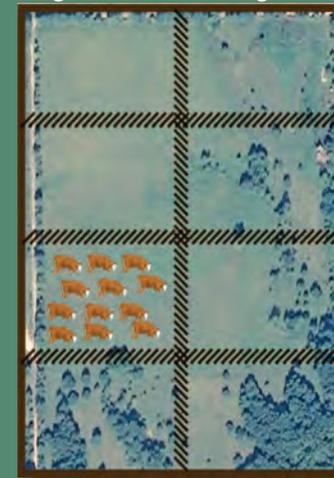
Multi-paddock intensive grazing is a system with with a minimum of five, or more pastures, sometimes referred to as paddocks..

Advantages:

- Highest forage production & use per acre.
- Weeds & brush are usually controlled naturally.
- More even distribution of manure throughout the paddocks.
- Usually increases stocking rates & livestock seem more content.
- Paddocks may be seeded or interseeded to different forages, depending on producer's goals and objectives.
- Pastures will have a longer rest period, improving pasture health.
- Paddocks & forages are grazed more efficiently.

Disadvantages:

- Requires careful monitoring of forage.
- Initial costs may be higher due to fencing materials and water.
- Water distribution systems may be more complicated due to increased number of paddocks.



Cliff Schlutte

Grazing Lands Council



Maybe I say this every year or maybe I say it everywhere I go, but this is really a great time to be in the grass-fed livestock grazing industry. And if you aren't in it already, the time is still right. Why? Because corn is expensive to grow and grass—when properly managed—always grows back. Last year was a tough one. A lot of things we do have been

changed—some temporarily, others maybe forever. But people here still need to eat. And consumers are more particular about their food—WHAT it is, HOW it was produced, WHERE it comes from, and how the SOIL, the PLANET, or whatever was impacted in order to make it and get it on their table.

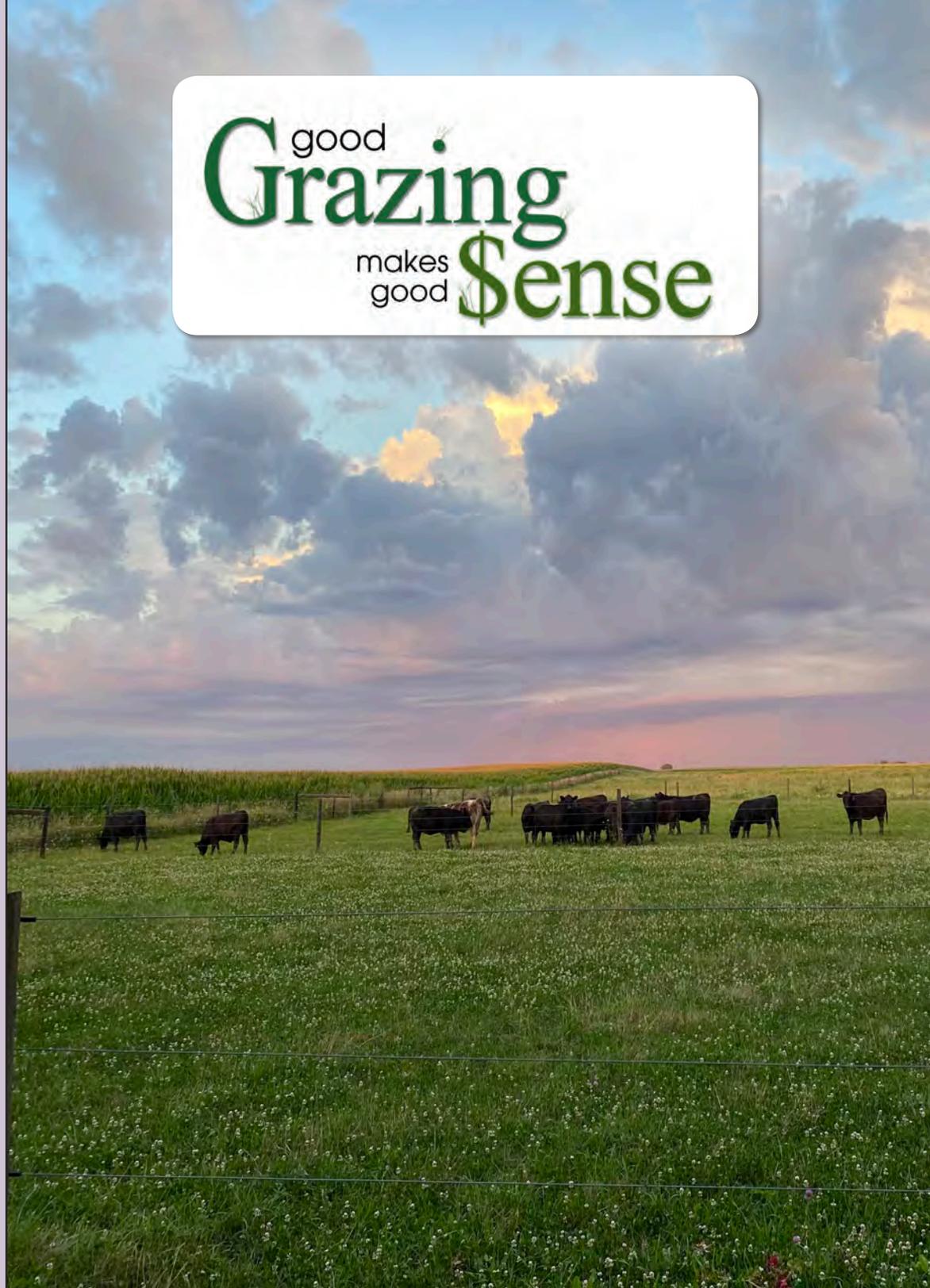
Livestock operators with a commitment to conservation can answer all those questions with confidence and integrity. The operations we've featured in this year's planner are the graziers who WANT customers, school kids, or anyone to come out and see what they do and how they do it. They are proud of their operation, the grass they tend to, and they are always interested in teaching others how to make the same principles work for others. Creating a grazing plan—which is pretty much the whole point of all this—takes some thought and some time.

It's worth it because it encompasses a lot of land, a lot of decisions, a lot of adjustments. You take it one day at a time and must be willing to reevaluate and make changes almost daily. One small change can alter everything. One dry summer without a drought plan can just about scare you to death. But you're always learning. Always trying to find a new way, a better way. And you're doing it to make a living, yes. But you're doing it right. To me, that's what makes grazing—and agriculture—such a challenge.

The best way to learn how to manage and find profitability in rotational grazing is to do it. But don't do it alone. Tap into the many resources, the people, the professionals who can help you increase your successes and decrease your failures. If you're into grazing, you've got friends you might not even know yet!

-Cliff Schlutte

good
Grazing
makes good
Sense



Natural Resources Conservation Service

Helping People Help the Land.

More Information Contact
Your local USDA NRCS Office at:
www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/il/contact/local/

Matt Bunger, *State Grazing Specialist*
2118 W. Park Court
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Special thanks to all the Illinois graziers
for allowing NRCS to use their beautiful
photos for this 2021 issue.

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Grazing Partners & Organizations



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