CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E528107Z2

Improved grazing management for soil compaction on Rangeland through monitoring activities

Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Range

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Soil Quality Degradation

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Enhancement Description

Three predominant key grazing areas are evaluated utilizing the Rangeland Health Assessment protocols to determine how well the ecological processes of the site(s) are functioning. Departure from reference categories will be determined, justified, and ratings described for soil and site stability, hydrologic function, and biotic integrity. Utilizing knowledge learned from this as a part of the ranch resource assessment, a qualifying professional, as detailed in the enhancement criteria, will provide recommendations or follow-up evaluations toward mitigating some of the degradation risks that are initially identified.

Criteria

- A written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand will be followed.

- Maintain diversity of rangeland plants to optimize delivery of nutrients to the animals by incorporating the intensity, frequency, timing and duration of grazing and/or browsing needed as determined by a planning process that includes:
  - Clear objectives,
- A resource inventory including forage inventory, structural improvements and existing resource conditions,

- Grazing plan, and

- All potential contingency plans.

- Supplemental feed and/or minerals will be balanced with the forage consumption to meet the desired nutritional level for the kind and class of grazing and/or browsing livestock.

- Secure the services of an experienced, knowledgeable Certified Range Management Consultant, Certified Professional in Range Management, NRCS Technical Service Provider approved for CAP 110, or a non-affiliated consultant with a bachelor or higher level degree in range science or other closely-related plant science discipline and a minimum of five years’ experience in rangeland conservation planning, monitoring, and consulting regarding use of rangeland improvement practices to select monitoring sites needed (three are required for this enhancement activity), assess rangeland health at these locations, provide all measured data collected, and assist in determining any areas that are potentially at risk of degradation.

- Consider site vulnerability as determined by the rangeland health assessment when planning out future monitoring activities toward the goal of assessing range trend and management needs to secure long-term, desirable range trend.
Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

☐ Prior to implementation, acquire a Grazing Management Plan with all the following components: (provide plan to NRCS for review and approval)
  - Producer goals, objectives and resource concerns
  - Forage-animal balance sheet
  - Location and condition of structural improvements
  - Grazing plan for livestock movement
  - Watering sites with availability, quantity and quality
  - Contingency plan
  - Forage inventory
  - Monitoring plan

☐ During implementation, secure a Certified Range Management Consultant, Certified Professional in Range Management, NRCS Technical Service Provider approved for CAP 110, or a non-affiliated consultant with a bachelor or higher level degree in range science or other closely-related plant science discipline and a minimum of five years' experience in rangeland conservation planning, monitoring, and consulting regarding use of rangeland improvement practices to:
  1) Select 3 monitoring sites to assess rangeland health.
  2) Conduct Rangeland Health Assessments on these sites using the Interpreting Indicators for Rangeland Health manual. (Technical Reference 1734-6).
  3) Develop a written recommendation identifying strategies for mitigating some of the degradation risks identified during the assessment.

☐ During implementation, identify key grazing areas and key forage species and monitor pastures for grazing utilization.

☐ During implementation, keep pasture/herd in/out records.

☐ During implementation, complete forage utilization jobsheet at the end of the grazing season for NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (528).
After implementation, provide the following items for review by NRCS:

- Range Health Assessment Sheets with all field notes and locations.
- Written documentation of range professionals follow up actions and recommendations.
- Records of pasture/ herd in/out dates.
- Completed forage utilization jobsheet.
- Written modifications to grazing management plan and monitoring plan to address resource concerns identified during the range health assessments.

NRCS will:

- As needed, provide technical additional assistance to participant as requested.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (CPS 528) as it relates to implementing this enhancement, including forage utilization jobsheet.
- Prior to implementation, provide Ecological Site Descriptions or Forage Suitability Groups as requested.
- After implementation, review Range Health Assessment Evaluation sheets and written recommendations made by range professional.
- After implementation, verify implementation of the grazing management plan by reviewing grazing/ herd in/out records, forage utilization jobsheet, and changes made to address resource concerns identified during the range health assessments.
NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name ______________________________ Contract Number _______________
Total Amount Applied ________________ Fiscal Year Completed ____________

______________________________  ___________
NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature Date
INDIANA SUPPLEMENT TO

CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E528107Z1

Additional Criteria for INDIANA

- In addition to the criteria specified in the National job sheet E528107Z1 the following additional criteria apply in Indiana:

  o A grazing plan will be followed according to the IN FOTG 528 – Prescribed Grazing Standard on all enrolled acreage that is to be grazed and document in the assistance notes that “stop grazing” heights are being maintained as directed in the table below.

  o No mechanical forage removal on enrolled acreage reduce carbon removal off site and maintain or increase root biomass.

  o Riparian and or sensitive areas around other water bodies (including sinkholes), will be deferred until mature forage growth is present prior to any grazing activities or access and then restricted to no more than 2 days per grazing period and managed to prevent any adverse impacts from grazing. All livestock access is controlled.

  o Stocking rates will be managed to ensure that adequate live cover and residual is maintained at all times.

  o Stop grazing heights will be followed on 80% or more of the enrolled acres based on the following table: (Note: Stop grazing heights are the shortest forages present after grazing; there will be variability in the forage present.) Livestock will be removed from enrolled acreage once stop grazing heights are present or the overwintering height is reached if grazed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forage Type</th>
<th>Stop Grazing Height (inches)¹/</th>
<th>Overwintering Height²/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduced Grasses and Legumes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Grasses, Legumes and Forbs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riparian and or Sensitive Areas</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6 or 12 if native</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In continuously grazed systems or systems with only 2 or 3 paddocks, the stop grazing height should be at least one inch taller than in rotated systems and stocked lighter.

Overwintering heights are ideally not reached until forages have become dormant.

Additional Documentation Requirements for INDIANA

- In addition to the documentation requirements specified in the National job sheet E528107Z1 the following additional documentation requirements apply in Indiana:
  - A forage livestock balance indicating proper stocking rates.
    - Initial PCS(s) will be taken between July 1 and August 15, and followup PCS(s) will be taken in July and September each year until the target **PCS of 40** is reached. Pasture Condition Score Sheet Help document is also located at [http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/technical/landuse/pasture/](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/in/technical/landuse/pasture/).
    - Copies of the completed PCS(s) will be provided to the NRCS field office.

Notes and comments on this National Enhancement:

- Livestock herd records are enter/exit dates for fields/paddocks with AU’s.
- Disregard the terminology “rangeland” plants. These will be pasture forage species here in Indiana.
- A reference sheet will be utilized in lieu of an ecological site description to document dominant species present.
- In lieu of a forage utilization job sheet, document in the assistance notes that “stop grazing” heights are being maintained as directed in the IN FOTG 528 – Prescribed Grazing Standard.