CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E528133Z2

Grazing management for improving quantity and quality of plant structure and composition for wildlife

Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture; Range; Associated Ag Land

RESOURCE CONCERN ADDRESSED: Degraded Plant Condition

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Enhancement Description

Managing the harvest of vegetation with grazing and/or browsing animals for the purpose of improving the quantity and quality of the structure and composition of the plant community that is available for wildlife.

Criteria

- Must follow a written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand.

- Removal of herbage will be in accordance with site production limitations, rate of plant growth, the physiological needs of forage plants, and the nutritional needs of the animals.

- Deferment (non-grazing period less than one year) and/or rest (non-grazing period equal or greater than one year) will be planned for critical periods of plant needs (such as post-planting or renovation, severe drought, etc.).

- Manage grazing and/or browsing animals to maintain adequate cover on sensitive areas (such as riparian areas, wetlands, habitats of concern, karst areas, etc.)
• Manage livestock movements based on rate of plant growth, available forage, and allowable utilization target. Develop and follow contingency plans to deal with episodic disturbance events.

• Both the specie(s) of concern and the plant functional groups providing structure and composition will be identified in the objectives of the prescribed grazing plan.

• Plan the intensity, frequency, timing and duration of grazing and/or browsing to provide for the development and maintenance of the plant structure, density and diversity needed for the desired fish and wildlife species of concern.

• Manage the afore-mentioned aspects of grazing events so as to maintain a minimum score of 0.60 when evaluated with the state NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).
 Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

☐ Prior to implementation, obtain a written grazing plan (NRCS can provide assistance as needed). Plan must include:
  o Clear goals and objectives of the plan, including identification of the specie(s) of concern and the plant functional groups providing structure and composition.
  o Contingency plan for events that trigger adverse results.
  o Forage/Animal Balance.
  o A grazing plan narrative describing the basis for when livestock movement or rotation will occur, including deferment plans.
  o Contingency plans for forage shortfalls.
  o Monitoring locations, key species, and monitoring techniques.
  o Map identifying all permanent pastures, water sources, and any riparian area or watershed drainage locations improved or maintained by this management.

☐ Prior to implementation, work with NRCS to complete an assessment of the site using the state’s approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).

☐ During implementation, keep the following documentation:
  o Livestock herd management records with seasonally important phenological stages of plant growth relative to species of concern.
  o Annually complete a forage utilization worksheet, such as NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) job sheet.
  o Grazing intensity records for all key grazing areas that accommodate the criteria.

☐ During implementation, consult with NRCS to adjust and adapt the grazing plan to current conditions to verify the changes meet enhancement criteria. Changes to the grazing plan will be documented in writing.
After implementation, make all records available for review by NRCS to verify implementation of the enhancement.

After implementation, complete an assessment of the site with NRCS using the state’s approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).

NRCS will:

- As needed, provide technical additional assistance to the participant as requested.
- Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (Code 528) as it relates to implementing this enhancement, including any state approved job sheets or work sheets.
- Prior to implementation, complete an assessment of the site with the participant using the state’s approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).
  - Species of Concern: ________________
  - WHEG score before implementation: __________
  - WHEG score after implementation: __________
- Prior to implementation, assist the participant with development of a grazing plan, if requested. If NRCS does not assist with plan development, the plan(s) will be reviewed by NRCS for approval prior to implementation to confirm the written objectives meet the criteria of the enhancement.
- Prior to implementation, explain the functionality of this enhancement with Enhancements E314332Z and E314134Z, if sequentially applicable.
- During implementation, as requested, assist the participant with adapting the grazing strategy and plan to current conditions.
- After implementation, review grazing plan, records, and documentation to verify the enhancement was implemented to meet the criteria.
- After implementation, complete an assessment of the site with the participant using the state’s approved NRCS Wildlife Habitat Evaluation Guide (WHEG).
  - WHEG score after implementation: __________
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
Additional Criteria for INDIANA

- In addition to the criteria specified in the National job sheet E528133Z2 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.

  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 To ensure diversity in forage heights, there will be a minimum of eight (8) paddocks in the grazing system and or low enough stocking rate to ensure diversity in forage heights throughout the primary nesting season of April 1 to August 1.

  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)</th>
<th>Overwintering Height</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduced Grasses and Legumes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</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 E528133Z2 the following additional documentation requirements apply in Indiana:
  - A forage livestock balance indicating proper stocking rates.

Notes and comments on this National Enhancement:

- Livestock herd records are enter/exit dates for fields/paddocks with AU’s.
- 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.