

OVERVIEW:

Why manage?

Many pasture problems such as slow growth, weed invasions, and bare ground, are caused by the pasture management methods being used. Good management is the key to healthy, productive pastures that lead to healthy, productive animals.

Rotational Systems

Livestock systems that rely on continuous grazing are often over and under grazed. When livestock are allowed to graze freely they eat the best forage first. If these plants are not allowed time to regrow, they will die and over time the pasture will decline in productivity. Rotational grazing is designed to let forages rest between grazings so that they can grow back more quickly. The more paddocks and the more frequent the rotation, the healthier the pasture.

Some Benefits:

- Improved forage quality and quantity
- Decreased feeding of hay and silage
- Enhanced manure distribution
- Decreased weeds
- Decreased erosion
- Decreased soil compaction
- Improved animal health and productivity
- Increased number of animals supported

"It's just how we're told to 'eat our greens;' we want to make sure our cattle are doing the same thing. The 'green of grass' to me means that it contains more nutrition, and the more nutritious the grass, the healthier the cattle."

- Cliff Hawbaker,
Hamilton Heights Dairy

PROGRAMS:

Managed grazing assistance available from USDA-NRCS

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program

ACEP provides financial assistance to eligible partners for purchasing Agricultural Land Easements that protect the agricultural use and conservation values of eligible land. In the case of working farms, the program helps farmers keep their land in agriculture.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

CSP is available in selected watersheds throughout the state. This program rewards good stewards by awarding incentive payments on practices that have been established and maintained as a part of a conservation plan in previous years.

Conservation Technical Assistance

This FREE assistance does not provide cost sharing for practices, but it does give the farmer a great tool for successful grazing. The NRCS provides technical personnel trained to develop grazing plans, give suggestions, and help producers with their questions. Grazing land specialists are available upon request to the Field Office (FO), while FO personnel are available to visit and discuss any questions about NRCS programs that you may have. Assistance includes stocking rate calculations, seeding recommendations, fencing and water system designs, dry matter intake assessment, and others. For technical assistance, just call, email, or visit any NRCS office!

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

EQIP provides technical and financial assistance to agricultural producers in order to address natural resource concerns and deliver environmental benefits through conservation practices or activities. NRCS will help eligible participants develop an EQIP plan of operations and, once implemented, payments will be made.

For example: After implementing the NRCS Prescribed Grazing practice, farmers receive a flat rate payment. This practice involves creating a grazing plan, with the help of NRCS, that considers the resources on the farm and the landowner's goals and provides the steps to follow the plan.

Other grazing practices covered by EQIP:

- Fencing
- Watering Facility
- Pipeline
- Trails and Walkways
- Heavy Use Area
- Forage Harvest Management
- Riparian Herbaceous Buffer
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Stream Crossing
- Grassed Waterway
- Spring Development
- Water Well
- Water Control Structures
- Roof Runoff Structures
- Access Control
- Livestock Shelter Structure
- Prescribed Burning
- Feed Management
- Forage and Biomass Planting
- Brush Management
- Pumping Plant

A well-managed pasture can improve the environment and your bottom line.

YOU CAN DO IT

Is rotational grazing an option for me?

You can consider grazing as an option whether you are a dairy, beef, stocker, or replacement cattle grower, sheep, goat or equine operation, or any other type of livestock producer.

Is there any help to get started on grazing?

There are many sources of assistance. Federal and State government assistance and technical help is available for graziers, as well as a strong network between farmers, agencies, and businesses that work together to help grazing grow in Pennsylvania.

Photo: Premier1Supplies, 2007



IT'S WORTH IT

Is managed grazing profitable?

Yes! Imagine taking some of those crops off the ground and committing your land to pasture:

1. You can reduce your costs in seed, fertilizer, fuel, machinery, and TIME; and let go of your stress in losing crops to weather factors.
2. You can improve your overall herd health and reduce your veterinarian bills, while extending the production life of your animals.
3. You can increase the amount of forage you are able to grow and harvest.

Give us a call!
We are here to [help](#).

For a list of local USDA-NRCS offices, visit:

WWW.PA.NRCS.USDA.GOV

or contact your local Grazing Lands Specialist:

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Have you thought about
**ROTATIONAL
GRAZING?**

USDA Natural Resources
Conservation Service (NRCS)

Offering technical and financial
assistance for managed grazing