NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE
CONSERVATION PRACTICE STANDARD

PRESCRIBED GRAZING
(Acre)
528A

DEFINITION

The controlled harvest of vegetation with grazing or browsing animals, managed with the intent to achieve a specified objective.

PURPOSE

This practice may be applied as part of a conservation management system to accomplish one or more of the following purposes:

- Maintain or improve the health and vigor of selected plant (s) and maintain a stable and desired plant community.
- Provide or maintain food, cover and shelter for animals of concern.
- Improve or maintain animal health and productivity.
- Maintain or improve water quality and quantity.
- Reduce accelerated soil erosion and maintain or improve soil condition for sustainability of the resource.

CONDITIONS WHERE PRACTICE APPLIES

This practice may be applied on all lands where grazing and/or browsing animals are managed.

CRITERIA

All Grazing Systems

1. Identify grazing starting and ending dates and forage heights using Appendix 1.
2. Estimate pasture stocking rate/carrying capacity using Appendix 2. Document data,
3. factors used, and caculations in written or electronic format.
3. Planning will be designed to insure that sheet and rill erosion is within acceptable soil loss limits.
4. Identify alternatives to adjust grazing system if fields are impacted by drought.

Rotational Grazing Systems

5. Calculate the number and size of grazing units using Appendix 2.
6. Re-calculate Pasture Stocking Rate/Carrying Capacity based upon improved pasture management system using Appendix 2.

SPECIFICATIONS (General)

Provide the following information to the producer for all pasture management systems:

1. The approximate beginning grazing date and ending date.
2. Minimum height requirements of pasture during the grazing season, and over winter height.
3. Documentation of the expected forage quantity (surplus and/or

deficiency) by field for each month of the grazing season.
4. The estimated number of livestock (by class) that can be supported on the operating unit.
5. A contingency plan that is a guide for adjusting the grazing program in cases of drought.
6. If forages are stockpiled, provide the estimated carrying capacity for the stockpiled fields, the approximate time to begin stockpiling and the fertility requirements for achieving the desired quality and quantity of stockpiled forage.

For Rotational Grazing Systems
provide the cooperator the following additional information:
7. The initial spring grazing sequence for all fields.
8. The estimated number of days each field will be grazed during each grazing cycle.
9. Provisions for managing any surplus forages.

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Consider treating gully erosion on pasture and access roads.

For pastures that have insufficient carrying capacity consider use of other pasture or hayland; supplemental feeding program; establishing or increasing legumes (Appendix 3); or management intensive grazing (MIG) program to provide adequate forage.

Consider fencing buffers, flash grazing or use of paddocks to protect streambank and water quality from sediment, pathogens and nutrients.

Consider developing a plan for supplemental feeding in cooperation with your county agent (ie: dairy cow being fed grain)

To meet forage needs in mid to late summer consider stockpiling forages

Consider conducting forage test to insure forages are meeting the livestock nutritional goals.

Consider improving quality, availability, or quantity of water to meet livestock and pasture management system requirements (Appendix 6).

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Operation: The producer will apply the prescribed grazing program on a continuing basis, making adjustments as needed to insure that the **objectives are met without degrading the resource base.**

Maintenance: **The producer will insure that proper fertility levels for the desired plant species are maintained. As a minimum, soil test each field every three years. Lime and fertilizer should be applied based on the plant nutrient requirements for the desired quantity and quality of forage.**

REFERENCES AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPING A PRESCRIBED GRAZING SCHEDULE:

1. Field Office Technical Guide.
2. Handbook for Conservation Planning of Grasslands in WV.
3. Agronomy Field Letter No. 26.
4. WVU Extension Service Bulletins.
5. Penn State Agronomy Guide.

6. WV-CPA 3 (Farm Organization Summary), WV-CPA 4 (Forage and Livestock Inventory and Summary), WV-CPA 5 (Grazing Schedule).
7. Missouri Grazing Manual.
8. Other reference material that contains supplemental planning information. CAUTION: Data must be defendable, ie., it must be current, from reputable sources, and applicable to the land units being planned.
9. Forage-Livestock Systems www.caf.wvu.edu/~forage/
10. National Range and Pasture Handbook.