

Rotational Grazing Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs)

Rotational grazing is a pasture management strategy that involves dividing grazing land into smaller paddocks and rotating livestock through these areas, letting plants recover between grazes. This approach offers numerous benefits for cattle ranchers, including improved forage utilization, enhanced animal health, and sustainable land management.

4 PRINCIPLES OF ROTATIONAL GRAZING

1. Balance forage supply and livestock demand;
2. Distribute grazing pressure across the pasture;
3. Provide rest for pasture plants during the growing season to help plants recover;
4. Avoid grazing during ecologically sensitive times.

Note: You may wish to consult an accredited technical advisor (e.g. Professional Agrologist, P.Ag or Certified Crop Advisor, CCA) to develop or support your management plans.

Why Adopt Rotational Grazing?

Improved Forage Quality

- Rotational grazing allows for better control over forage utilization, preventing overgrazing and promoting the growth of high-quality pasture plants.
- Enhanced forage quality leads to improved nutrition for livestock.

Optimized Animal Health

- Reduced exposure to parasites and diseases as cattle move to fresh paddocks regularly.
- Greater opportunity for visual inspection of the herd and positive handling experiences.

Increased Carrying Capacity

- Efficient utilization of available forage results in increased carrying capacity of pasture, allowing support for more livestock on the same acreage.
- Maximizes the productivity of the grazing land.

Soil Health and Erosion Control

- Rotational grazing minimizes soil compaction by allowing for periods of rest and recovery.
- Improved soil structure and organic matter content contribute to erosion control and water retention.

Cost Savings

- Reduced reliance on supplemental feed due to improved forage quality and increased grazing efficiency.
- Lower veterinary costs due to enhanced animal health.

Key Considerations

Paddock Design and Size

- Customizable paddock sizes are determined based on management requirements for forage growth rates, nutritional needs, and the number of animals.
- Adjust paddock size to accommodate seasonal variations in forage availability.

Rotation Frequency

- Determine the appropriate rotation frequency based on forage growth and recovery rates.
- Adjust rotation schedules seasonally to optimize forage utilization.

Water Management

- Ensure access to clean water in each paddock to encourage even grazing distribution.
- Implement water systems that allow for efficient movement between paddocks.

Monitoring and Adaptation

- Regularly monitor forage conditions, livestock health, and pasture recovery.
- Adjust rotation plans based on observed conditions, weather patterns, and animal requirements.

Infrastructure Investment

- Consider electric fencing, portable water systems, and access lanes to enhance the effectiveness of the system.

Start a Project Today

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