



Enhancements for Pastureland
CSP—Conservation Practice Enhancement Job Sheets
Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
September 2006

Enhancement Activities

Enhancement activities are actions that provide natural resource benefits above the minimum level of NRCS conservation practice standards. When implemented, the enhancement activities should result in an improvement (either observed or measured) to the soil, water, plant, animal or air resources and provide for more efficient resource utilization.

Enhancement Activity Benefits

Enhancement activities associated with grazing management should result in the following benefits:

- Reduced risks to ground and surface water quality.
- Increased plant and soil health for better water and mineral cycling through increased soil organic matter and more biological activity in the soil.
- Lower production costs through increased efficiency of the operation and/or lowered energy costs.
- Decrease the need for nitrogen fertilization, improve wildlife habitat, extend the grazing season and improve animal nutrition and health through increased pasture diversity by including legumes.
- Ensure good winter cover, extend the grazing season and decrease hay feeding by no-till planting of cool season annuals.
- Lengthen the grazing season by stockpiling fescue and/or bermudagrass.
- Better monitoring of natural resources and improved decision making of grazing by use of pasture management records.

CSP Enhancement Payments

- Practice rotational grazing at either of two levels (medium and high) of management intensity.
- Lengthen the grazing season through stockpiling forages and no-tilling cool season annuals.
- Increase pasture diversity through seeding and management of legumes.
- Manage water systems to limit access of livestock to bodies of water.

Clients Acknowledgement Statement

I have elected to use the following grazing management activities and understand the requirements of those activities:

- _____ Practice rotational grazing at medium or high level of management (worksheet 1).
- _____ Extend the grazing through stockpiling tall fescue/bermudagrass and/or planting cool season annuals. (worksheet 2).
- _____ Manage the water systems for livestock to limit access to bodies of water (worksheet 3).
- _____ Manage for plant diversity through planting and managing for legumes (worksheet 4).

I agree the following information will be provided to NRCS upon request:

- Written documentation of the activity (use of attached worksheets or equivalent).
- Copies of dated receipts for equipment, supplies or services.

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NRCS, AR
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Worksheet 1—Practice rotational grazing with choice of two management intensities.

Payment=\$7/acre for medium management intensity or \$15/acre for high management intensity.

Goal:

Strengthen plant and soil health and plant vigor through pasture rest, improve animal habit through increased harvest efficiency of grazing animals and increased availability of quality forage by managing timing, duration and frequency of grazing.

Management:

A medium management intensity system requires 4-7 pastures (paddocks) per grazing group of livestock. The pastures are rested 75-85% of the time to restore/maintain plant vigor. Each pasture would be grazed for 5-10 days and then rested while the other paddocks are grazed. This system would probably fit the management needs of cow-calf producers but would not provide the degree of forage harvest efficiency of the high management system..

The high management intensity system requires a minimum of eight pastures (paddocks) per grazing group of livestock and is rested more than 85% of the time. The livestock are rotated on average twice a week through the grazing season to increase the harvest efficiency above 50%. This system would benefit producers who have a cow-calf unit with retained ownership of calves through the yearling stage or they background stockers or have grass-based dairy operations. This system would also benefit small ruminant producers.

This enhancement requires the land manager to keep records. Records showing when pastures are grazed are required and estimates of forage availability prior to grazing and immediately after being grazed are suggested. Prescribed Grazing, conservation practice standard 528, should be followed.

Example of records of pasture rotation:

Lvstk type	Number	Pasture ID	Date In	Forage Ht	Date Out	Forage Ht
Cows/calves	30	Pad 8	Apr 20, 06	10 inches	Apr 22	4 inches

Use records such as this to indicate which pastures and acreage are being intensively managed

Pasture Units	Acres	Management Intensity	Composition
Pasture 11	10	Medium	Fescue-red clover

I certify that I use a (medium) (high) management intensive rotational grazing program on _____ acres of pasture.

Name _____

Date _____

Worksheet 2—Extend the grazing season

Payment=\$15/acre. No-till planting of cool season annuals into established warm season grass pastures.

Payment=\$10/acre. Manage for utilization of stockpiled fescue and/or stockpiled bermudagrass pastures for late fall and winter grazing.

Goal:

Provide grass cover for a longer time during the year and yield more grazing days for livestock.

Management:

Extending the grazing season and increasing plant diversity are practices that can enhance the pasture utilization of the farm. Strengthening the forage base benefits the animal habitat, slows the potential for erosion and increases the efficiency of the grazing operation.

These enhancements (all can be chosen) are common practices used in Arkansas and have been studied through the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service demonstration farms. No-till planting of cool season annuals such as wheat, oats, rye or annual ryegrass into perennial warm season grasses (bermudagrass, for example) can significantly extend the grazing season throughout Arkansas. Stockpiling tall fescue has been used for many years but recently research has been conducted to evaluate stockpiling bermudagrass for grazing after the frost date. Recommendations are to graze stockpiled bermuda for late fall grazing and use the stockpiled tall fescue for winter grazing as the fescue retains higher quality for a longer time period and is palatable farther into the winter grazing season. Both of these stockpiling practices will decrease the need for harvested forages for animals.

Use a table such as this to indicate pastures, practice used, acreage, and how managed.

Practice	Pasture Number	Acreage	Management	Notes
Stockpiling (ex)	8	12	Strip grazed	
No-till (example)	14	20	Ryegrass/bermuda	

I certify that I use the practices shown on the pasture listed.

Name _____

Date _____

Worksheet 3—Manage livestock watering systems to limit access of grazing livestock bodies of water.

Payment=\$5/acre Water systems with access by livestock to water within 1000 feet of grazing and limited complete access to bodies of water such as ponds and streams.

Goal:

Enhance water quality through managing of livestock access to bodies of water and have drinking water available to livestock to enhance harvest efficiency of pasture.

Management:

Managing water systems for livestock has long been a high priority for NRCS and conservation districts; however, this should not necessarily be considered a total exclusion through fencing. Livestock should be managed in a grazing system that protects riparian areas, manages the forage availability in pastures so they functionally serve as a buffer or filter area through residual plant dry matter, and decreases the opportunity for livestock to “loungue” in water bodies. Preferably, livestock should have access to water within 800-1000 feet of where they are grazing. This enhances the utilization of the grass and prevents overgrazing of areas near water sources. Additionally, water system development (pipeline and waterers) is preferred to ponds and access to streams. However, there are management practices that can be used to limit access to ponds and streams and have been shown to greatly benefit water quality and control erosion. For example, the use of a pond access area (heavy use area plus development of fencing to prevent livestock movement into the pond) is a way to limit access.

Pasture	Acres	Water system	Distance - water	Notes
3 (example)	15	Tank in pasture	1000 ft	Tank is portable

I certify that the guidelines described above are met.

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Worksheet 4— Increase pasture diversity and improve nitrogen efficiency through management of legumes.

Payment=\$10/acre. Manage pasture by interseeding legumes for improvement of animal habitat.

Payment=\$15/acre. Manage pastures for a 30% legume composition on 50% of the acreage.

Goal:

Maintain legumes in pasture to contribute as a source of nitrogen, maintain and extend the quality of pasture during the grazing season, and contribute to the diversity of diet of grazing ruminants.

Management:

While legumes are considered to be important in increasing pasture quality, under a well-managed grazing system, the quality factor becomes less important as the other plants are of higher quality. The important component is the use of legumes as a source of nitrogen, allowing less nitrogen fertilization to be required for good plant growth. This requires 20-30% of the pasture be legumes. Pastures can be managed to stimulate legume growth. This enhancement emphasizes managing pastures to allow the legumes to grow by keeping the competition of other plants under control. This may also require not spraying for weeds in order to keep the legume component.

Using records such as shown below, list the pastures and acreages that meet the maintenance of legumes guidelines.

Pasture	Acreage	Seeded legumes	Managed for 30% composition	

Signed _____

Date _____