

## Lesson Plan 14.

### Pasture Use Records

#### Goals/Overview:

Explain purposes and techniques to monitor pasture use by livestock and the value of linking pasture and water quality impacts to grazing management practices.

#### Learning Objectives:

1. Gain ability to use Pasture Use Records—Worksheet 9 in the Template to consistently note the timing and intensity of livestock rotation across the ranch and onto other parcels.
2. Understand that the worksheet may apply to most, but not all, pastures.
3. Understand the purpose of the worksheet is to know exact dates for pasture use, including certain leased pastures, and/or calculate the carrying capacity of individual pastures and ranch.

#### Introduction/Hook:

- Discuss situations in which pasture use was not recorded and when it would have been useful to have had the information to make management decisions. When evaluating pasture utilization and any impact of grazing, it is critical to know how the pasture was grazed by recording the grazing parameters (timing, type of livestock, density of livestock, and duration of grazing period).

#### Materials/Speakers:

- Invited speaker and facilitator of discussion would be someone with knowledge in livestock and grazing management from UCCE, NRCS, RCD, or other relevant organization.
- Instructional video: “Pasture Use Records—Worksheet 9” (4 minutes).

- Bring copies of the [RWQP Template](#) with extra copies of [Pasture Use Records—Worksheet 9](#).
- Provide attendees handouts of pertinent resources.

#### Time Allocated:

Allow 20 to 40 minutes (10 to 20 minutes for presentation and 10 minutes for question/answer).

#### Procedures/Activities/Strategies/Questions:

- Open with a brief story or anecdote, welcome newcomers, and ask for outstanding questions or concerns.
- Provide opportunity for participants to ask questions and review previous sections to be sure they understand how they fit together and can change over time according to conditions and priorities.
- Present video: “Pasture Use Records—Worksheet 9.”
- Review grazing parameters, issues, and objectives that are frequently encountered by participants.
- Discuss situations and locations, such as conservation easements or leased pastures, where pasture use records would be useful.
- Complete the Session Evaluation Form (appendix A).

#### Conclusion/Self-assessment:

- Ask participants to consider if some pastures are underutilized, and if pastures could be used at different seasons or grazed more frequently in order for livestock to graze the pasture uniformly.
- If some pastures are overgrazed, think of options for reducing stocking numbers or altering timing of grazing, or consider the use of other pastures to expand forage resources.

**Resources:**

- Allen-Diaz, B., R. D. Jackson, J. W. Bartolome, K. W. Tate, and L. G. Oates. 2004. Long-term grazing study in spring-fed wetlands reveals management tradeoffs. *California Agriculture* 58(3):144–148. <http://calag.ucanr.edu/archive/?type=pdf&article=ca.v058n03p144>
- George, M., D. Bailey, M. Borman, D. Ganskopp, G. Surber, and N. Harris. 2007. Factors and Practices that Influence Livestock Distribution. Oakland: UC Agriculture and Natural Resources Publication 8217. <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8217.pdf>
- Tate, K. W., E. R. Atwill, N. K. McDougald, and M. R. George. 2003. Spatial and temporal patterns of cattle feces deposition on rangeland. *Journal of range management* 56(5):432–438. <https://journals.uair.arizona.edu/index.php/jrm/article/view/9824>

Undersander, D., B. Albert, D. Cosgrove, D. Johnson, and P. Peterson. 2014. Pastures for profit: A guide to rotational grazing. Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Extension. <https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0145/8808/4272/files/A3529.pdf>

**Next Steps/Future Lessons:**

- Consider drought impacts on forage production and how pasture use was different during dry years (for example, 2013) and wet years (for example, 2005). Did bare soil or compaction increase?
- Where are there opportunities to stockpile vegetation for late summer and early fall forage and avoid grazing during winter months—such as riparian, wetland, sensitive, or brush areas?