

Lesson Plan 8.

Pasture Inventory

Goals/Overview:

Learn how to complete the Pasture Inventory—Worksheet 3 of the RWQP and understand the importance of characterizing pasture units for helping meet production, grazing management, and water quality goals. Acknowledge that existing pasture inventory documents or grazing management plans can be incorporated into the RWQP instead of creating a new document or form.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understand a working naming convention for similar management units or individual pastures.
2. Develop a basic understanding of residual dry matter (RDM) management and minimum RDM guidelines and their relevance to water quality.
3. Learn how to identify the pasture unit characteristics in Worksheet 3, including soil, slope, percent woody vegetation cover, and minimum RDM.
4. Gain ability to find expected RDM based on location, slope, and woody vegetation.
5. Review fundamentals of RDM—definition, water quality importance, variability across ranch soil type, and annual precipitation.
6. Discuss reasons for creating resource management units within a ranch based on the need for specific resource objectives. Sometimes pasture units don't coincide with the desired resource management units.

Introduction/Hook:

- Attributing natural resource characteristics to pasture units can be helpful in validating existing pasture unit divisions and rethinking different divisions that align with natural resource management and pasture production characteristics.
- Share unusual names of pastures, historical anecdotes, and limiting factors to production in each.

Materials/Speakers:

- Invited speaker and facilitator of discussion would be someone with knowledge in overall ranch management and planning from UCCE, NRCS, RCD, or other relevant organization.
- Water Board staff can be available to review and further explain regulations and history.
- Instructional video: “[Pasture Inventory—Worksheet 3](#)” (14 minutes).
- Bring copies of [RWQP Template](#) with extra copies of [Pasture Inventory—Worksheet 3](#).
- Provide attendees handouts of pertinent resources.

Time Allocated:

Allow 30 to 40 minutes (15 minutes for presentations and 15 minutes for questions/discussion).

Procedures/Activities/Strategies/Questions:

- Open with a brief story or anecdote, welcome newcomers, and ask for outstanding questions or concerns.
- Share unusual pasture names and various management objectives, limiting factors, problems, and so on.
- Explain the fundamental purposes and aspects of RDM and its relevance to water quality. Refer to the publication “[Guidelines for Residual Dry Matter on Coastal and Foothill Rangelands in California \(#8092\)](#).”
- Advise participants that RDM will be covered in more detail in Lesson Plan 15.
- Present video: “[Pasture Inventory—Worksheet 3](#).”
- Discuss RDM variability within and between pastures while comparing grazing management, slope, and woody vegetation cover.
- Review maps and aerial photos of specific pastures on ranch.

- Complete the Session Evaluation Form (appendix A).

Conclusion/Self-assessment:

- Ask participants to reflect upon existing pasture management and water quality problems that could compromise ranch viability.
- Suggest that participants consider if and how more pastures or subdividing existing pastures could assist in livestock management.

Resources:

Bartolome, J. W., W. E. Frost, N. K. McDougald, and M. Connor. 2006. California Guidelines for Residual Dry Matter (RDM) Management on Coastal and Foothill Annual Rangelands. Oakland: UC Agriculture and Natural Resources Publication 8092. <http://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8092.pdf>

Guenther, K., and G. Hayes. 2008. Monitoring annual grassland residual dry matter: A mulch manager's guide for monitoring success. 2nd ed. Brewster, Washington: Wildland Solutions. <http://www.wildlandsolutions.com/rdm/>

Next Steps/Future Lessons:

- Ask participants to consider limiting factors to production within each pasture and when they started to occur; brainstorm options to remedy problems.
- Suggest that participants view previews for videos 19 and 20 prior to Lesson Plan 8.