

NESARE Grazing Training Agenda for New York Session 2 March 14, 2011

9:30 AM Review of Session 1, Q&A, check in on participant progress and progress toward SARE grant goals. Share actual farm family goals and other data collected. What have been the challenges? Surprises?

10:30 AM Why Grazing Planning? (*I've got this land and I don't know what to do with it?*) Why are we working with farmers and why are they planning their grazing? Exploring concepts and their actual goals. Do you know what an agency accredited grazing plan looks like and how it helps or is weak? (examples passed around) How will holistic grazing planning help augment this plan? How do you marry the production and financial goals with the environmental goals? (group exercise)

10:30-10:45 AM Break

10:45 AM The how to's of Grazing Planning. What do you see in this picture? The one hour rapid farm visit assessment (group exercise). Asking the right questions. How to use the web soil survey, mapping and forages.org to your advantage? Measuring the sward and figuring out the animal needs, stocking rate vs. stock density. The dynamics of the 4 ecosystem processes. What is rest? How are you teaching farmers this knowledge? What are the shortfalls and how to work with farmer (farmer quest?) and animal behavior? Q & A

12:00 PM Lunch

1:00 PM The how to's continued. Building the plan and transferring information to the "chart". Building a feed inventory and guarantying you have feed "back" from major events planned. Use participant's farms as examples. Run through a plan (hypothetical) and flow of a season long grazing. What happens? How do you adjust? What are you looking for? How are you planning for slow growth? Exploring the many strategies that can come up (group exercise). Extending the grazing season. Are you thinking of how this moves towards the farm family goal? Q& A

2:30 PM Break (hopefully outside)

2:45 PM Pasture Walks and Press Releases: Making your event stand out and building relationships.

3:15 PM Introduce next session (Reading the land- Biological monitoring and the four ecosystem processes, creating a baseline chart. Animal behavior, plant species and infrastructure planning primer)

3:45 PM Complete Evaluation.

4:00-4:30 PM Last Q & As then Adjournment

SARE Grazing Planning Training notes – Session 2 NY – Auburn – March 14, 2011

Important Concepts

Why plan grazing?

- Estimating available forage for the year – How does the plan do this?
- Determine appropriate stocking rates – Where in the process do you do this?
- Estimating plant recovery times – How is this done?
- Determine livestock forage needs – Where in the planning process do you do this?
- Avoid overgrazing – How is this accomplished?
- Create the landscape you desire – What does this really mean? Where is this described?
- Incorporate environmental and social factors – Why is this important?

Other considerations:

- Move toward your F/F Goal (all 3 parts) - What are the 3 parts?
- Achieve the profit you've planned for that year – Where would you find this?
- Enhance animal performance and increase animal numbers if possible – Why?
- Minimize the overgrazing of plants – Why?
- Reduce over-rested plants and soil surfaces – Why? Why is this controversial?
- Speed up biological decay of dead/dying plants enhancing mineral cycling for next year's growth
- Coordinate activities – breeding, weaning, cropping, hunting, personal schedules, vacations, etc
- Reduce labor and improve efficiencies

What do you think of when you hear “rotational grazing”? Do multiple paddocks guarantee success?

What do you have to link to in order to create a successful grazing Plan? F/F Goal – Why? Financial Plan – Why?

Four broad management guidelines of comprehensive grazing planning:

- 1 – stocking rate – Where is this determined?
- 2 – time – Where is this determined? Why worry about time?
- 3 – stock density – Why is this important?
- 4 – herd effect – What is this referring to? (excited animals)
 - o **Benefits** include: suppress brush; increase litter; help plant material decay; promote tighter plant spacing; better water absorption; reduce runoff/evaporation; soften banks

or gullies and increase plants on these areas; reduce noxious weeds; create healthier soil conditions (What?); clear firebreaks or roadsides

- How can we **create it**? Putting out feed supplements; disbursed salt (not blocks); diluted molasses; disbursing hay for hungry livestock; driving livestock; wolves; others?

When planning center it on:

- **Landscape** you are trying to create – Where do you find this described?
- **Total forage** will farm have to **supply** – Is it possible to get this perfectly accurate?
- How **long** will **standing forage** last in a **nutritious state** at the end of the growing season?
- How **long** will **animals** spend in **each paddock** and **when** will they **return** (recovery period)?
- **Where** and **when** will you need to **concentrate animals** to improve the pasture health, reduce weeds/woody vegetation, prevent soil erosion?

What is overgrazing?

- Explain this **definition** of overgrazing - Repeated pruning of plant roots. (stored energy)
- **How does** overgrazing **happen**?
 - Animals **remain too long** and graze plants repeatedly as they try to grow
 - Animals **return too quickly** to a previously grazed area and re-graze plants before they have recovered
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- Do you **overgraze** pasture or **individual plants**? Why is this question important?
- What are **signs of overgrazed plants**? Distorted plants, dead centers, disappearance
- What are **signs of over-rested plants**? Old growth remains standing into next growing season, graying of plants, dead or weakened plant centers, weakened root systems (can pull up plants)

What is **rest**, in terms of pasture/plants/animals? Withholding any form of disturbance (fire, grazing, machinery, etc) for a considerable length of time

What is **partial rest** as compared to total rest? Grazing animals are present but behave calmly with nothing to excite them, so that a large part of the plants and soil surface remain undisturbed