

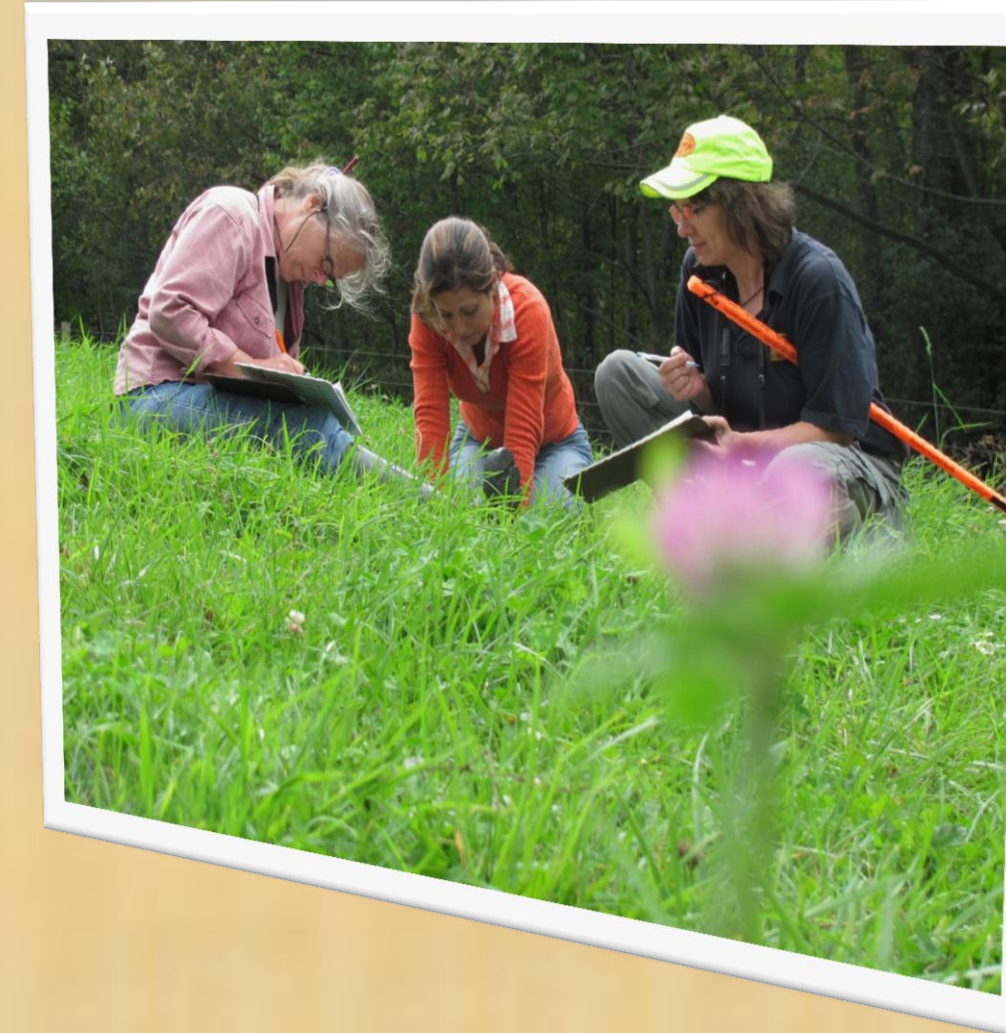
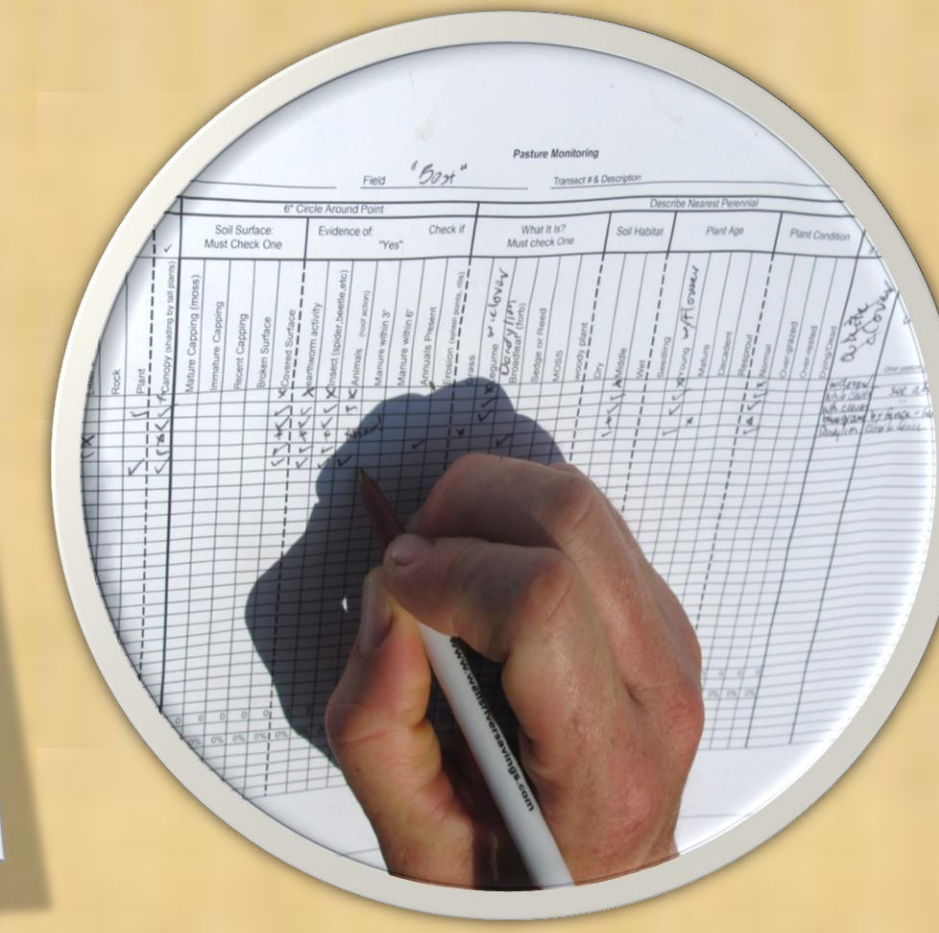
UTILIZING HOLISTIC PLANNED GRAZING AS A REGENERATIVE ENGINE FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

“Building Relationships and Meeting Farmers Where They Are”

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The Story

This comprehensive, "built from the microbes up" grazing training program for Northeast agency service providers, extension educators and farmer mentors focuses on building local intellectual capital while learning along side farm families to create the landscape we want for regenerating agriculture, watersheds and foodsheds with grasslands. Through the process of implementing farm family goals and better decision-making dynamics, learning holistic planned grazing techniques and tools, monitoring and measuring ecological and financial health, we inspire an increased network of highly trained, knowledgeable grazing professionals to meet the ever-increasing demand for educational and technical assistance by farms of all shapes and sizes tapping into the potential of Northeast pastures.



Project Performance Targets:

30 extension educators, conservation professionals, grassland advocates and/or farmer mentors from the Northeast SARE region are trained and deliver holistic and practical grazing strategies to 120 farms, representing 24,000 acres, of which 72 farms on 14,400 acres develop and implement a holistic planned grazing system. We estimate that the impacts on these 72 farms will be (1) financial - \$2,000 increase in profitability due to reduced production costs, value added products and/or a production increases; (2) ecological – 25% increase in ground cover, biological activity and improved soil & forage health; and (3) social – measurable subjective improvement in family quality of life.

Accomplishments to Date:

- ❖ 43 grazing professionals from NY, PA, VT and NH representing Conservation Districts, Extension Educators, USDA-NRCS, grazing consultants and farmer mentors have completed 3 grazing training sessions per state in 3 topics. 1.) Learned how to create farm family goals with their participating farms and establishing social and financial baseline data to measure impacts of the grazing plan implementation. 2.) Learned more about holistic planned grazing methods, tools and approaches. 3.) Gained practical knowledge of biological monitoring, data collection and learned the value of improving the 4 ecosystem processes.
- ❖ 30 project participants are working with over 76 farms to complete holistic grazing plans.
- ❖ 100% of participants indicated they have used the tools and trainings to enhance their knowledge base with the most growth in developing grazing plans, biological monitoring and developing farm family goals.
- ❖ 60% of farmers have completed a whole farm goal, 40% have completed a monitoring plan and 75% have completed a written grazing plan.
- ❖ The planned grazing and reading the land sessions brought together over 60 outside auxiliary conservation service providers, extension educators and local farmers to join the learning experience in addition to the project participants.
- ❖ Working with NOFA-NY, the Northeast Organic Dairy Producers Alliance, Tioga County SWCD, Lewis Co. CCE, NOFA-VT and the Lancaster County, PA Graziers, resulted in over 270 farmers in reading their own land and keeping track of improvements on the northeast biological pasture monitoring chart.
- ❖ To date, over 300 grazing charts have been printed and given out to farmers with one group of Amish dairy farmers forming a grazing management profit team.