

GRAZING PLANNING COURSE WRAPS UP TWO-YEAR GRANT

By Cheryl Cesario, Grazing Outreach Specialist

This fall marks the end of a two-year grant for our grazing management course funded by Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NE-SARE). This project allowed us to conduct a multiple 4-week courses to dive into the nuts and bolts of grazing management. The class series allowed farmers to study essential grazing principles and develop management plans for their operations. In addition, the grant project funded follow-up technical assistance to class participants as they implemented new practices.

Over the two-year project, we conducted classes in 5 locations, reached 31 farmers with planning and implementation on 1,600 acres. Farmers participated in this program across 7 Vermont counties and included 11 beef producers, 9 cow dairies, 6 goat dairies and 5 sheep producers. Six of the 31 farms entered into Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) grazing contracts for project cost-sharing.

In addition to obtaining funding for grazing implementation, grazing planning allowed farmers to identify farm goals and develop a strategy specific to their farm. Some were looking to better utilize

the acreage that they had, others were developing a plan that involved expansion. Either way, in-class planning and calculations were tested in the field, and

further adapted. Participants left with tools that can evolve with their farm management.

A quote from one farmer participant, Becca Knouss, of The Goat Project in Bennington, Vt.

“The pasture class offered by UVM Extension this spring was a total game changer for me... the class helped me to better systematically set up pastures so I was moving portable fencing in a more sensible manner. I was also able to learn how to calculate how much dry matter my goats required so I can better manage hay consumption in both the summer and winter months.

I would like to add a most sincere thank you to all who were able to make this happen. I can't stress enough how helpful those 4 meetings truly were.”



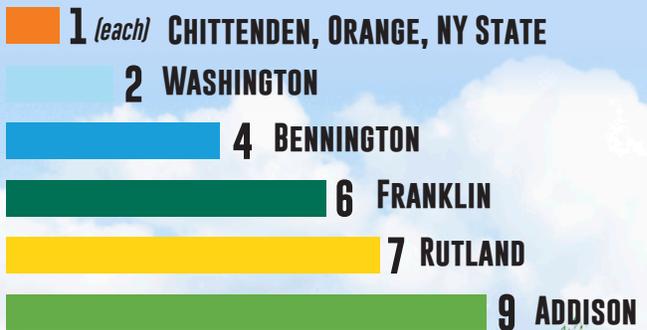
5 COURSES
31 FARMERS
1,600
PLANNED ACRES

PRIMARY FARM ENTERPRISE

- BEEF
- DAIRY (COW)
- DAIRY (GOAT)
- SHEEP



LOCATIONS OF FARMS



A few participants of the Grazing Planning Course who've had success applying grazing concepts to their farm business. (left to right) Kevin and Patty Plew – Plew Farm; Linda and Claire Stanley - Paul Lin Farm; Chad and Morgan Beckwith – Ice House Farm.