

## **Prescribed Grazing**...managing the controlled harvest of vegetation with grazing animals.



Grazing cattle, photo courtesy USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service

### **Purposes**

This practice is designed to meet the following purposes:

- To improve or maintain the health and vigor of selected plant(s) and to maintain a stable and desired plant community**
- To provide or maintain food, cover, and shelter for livestock and wildlife of concern**
- To improve or maintain animal health and productivity**
- To maintain or improve water quality and quantity**
- To reduce accelerated soil erosion and maintain or improve soil condition for the sustainability of the resource.**

## Benefits

Prescribed grazing can improve water infiltration on grazed land, protect riparian vegetation and streambanks from erosion, reduce nutrient loading into water bodies, and promote economically stable plant communities.

## Applications

This practice applies to all lands where grazing animals are managed.

## Design and Installation

Prescribed grazing involves the management of animal species, number, grazing distribution, length of grazing periods, and timing of use to provide sufficient deferment from grazing during the growing period. The duration, season, rest periods, and optimal starting and ending grazing heights will be based on desired plant community goals, the expected productivity of key species, and management unit objectives. Consult an NRCS conservationist for site-specific guidance.

## Maintenance

Remove or eliminate hazards from pasture such as loose wire, hardware, downed trees, heavy limbs, or holes in the ground that may injure livestock. Poisonous plants should also be scouted for regularly and removed if found at levels that would cause illness or death to grazing animals. In addition, periodically inspect and repair, if needed, any structures (e.g. fences) installed to facilitate this practice.

## Relative Cost

**Installation** low ● ○ ○ ○ ○ high

**Maintenance** low ● ○ ○ ○ ○ high

## For Additional Information...

Visit the Indiana NRCS office online at <http://www.in.nrcs.usda.gov/>, see the Indiana Job Sheet or the Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) standard for (528) Prescribed Grazing, or contact your local USDA-NRCS office

*Local USDA-NRCS contact information*