

# Prescribed Grazing Checklist

N. C. Practice Checklist 528 Job Sheet Supplement

The following is a certification checklist. For complete practice information, refer to NRCS NC Conservation Practice Standard 528, Prescribed Grazing. Every statement must be checked as completed and acceptable to meet the minimum prescribed grazing requirements.

- Periodic assessments utilizing the pasture conditioning scorecard (PCS) have been recorded to show results of the grazing strategy. The value of periodic assessments of pasture condition is explained to the producer. The following pasture indicators must have a minimum score of 4:
- live plant cover
  - severity of use by grazing
  - plant vigor
  - percent desirable plants

- Forage heights post-grazing and during “rest” intervals are appropriate for rapid growth when environmental conditions are favorable. It will be obvious if plants have been repeatedly grazed “too close” over several months or if they were overgrazed only during the last graze period. **Infrequently grazing below the target heights is to be expected and usually does not decrease the long term survival of the plants; however, repeatedly doing so on some species will alter the survival, the botanical composition, and the cover by live vegetation.** See table below and attached Grazing Guide for other species and estimated recovery period (days before re-grazing).

Forage Species	Target height to stop grazing	Minimum target height to start grazing
Bluegrass, Fescue, Orchardgrass, Smallgrains, Ryegrass, Clovers	2-3”	6-12”
Bermudagrass, Dallisgrass, Bahiagrass, Crabgrass	2”	6-8”
Switchgrass, Indiangrass, Big bluestem, Gamagrass, Sorghum, Sudangrass, Millets	4-6”	16-24”

- Estimated feed balance has been calculated to determine a reasonable carrying capacity allowing the manager to achieve a target level of animal performance without deterioration of the grazing land resources.
- If needed, sacrifice areas for feeding have been appropriately located to minimize runoff into water courses. Rotating and dividing sacrifice areas if possible and removing nutrients through haying is encouraged.
- Sacrifice areas or other critical areas having less than 50% ground cover are identified and plans made for increasing the cover with live vegetation.
- Livestock are managed such that no adverse impacts occur on drainage channels, streams or wetlands as a result of lounging, wading, or general overuse. Control of livestock on such areas is accomplished through infrequent and judicial flash grazing when soil is relatively dry or by complete exclusion from the sensitive areas.
- No gully, sheet and rill, or stream bank erosion is evident.

- Feeding, handling, and watering facilities are located as far as possible from (but not less than 100 feet from) environmentally sensitive areas such as streams (perennial, seasonal or intermittent), wetlands, other drainage ways, and other critical areas. Existing watering facilities less than 100 feet from water courses are satisfactory if drainage to water courses is greater than 100 feet. Document drainage distance.
- Updated soil test report (no later than three years old) on prescribed grazing pastures. The value of using soil testing to manage soil fertility and forage production is explained to the producer.
- All essential, facilitating and supporting practices needed to affect adequate grazing management as planned by this practice standard have been installed and are maintained in good working order and are being operated as intended. Examples include Fence (382), Watering Facilities (614), Pest Management (595), Brush Management (314), Pasture Planting (512), etc.
- Stockpiling of fall growth to be grazed during the winter is seriously considered as a way to reduce the amount of hay feeding during the winter. \*May require hay to be fed in the fall when soil is firm and dry.

I certify that prescribed grazing is being followed on \_\_\_\_\_ acres on tract \_\_\_\_\_.

Producer \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Designated Conservationist \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*Additional information can be found in the eFOTG/Section I/Reference Lists/NC Technical References/Pasture and Hayland Folder*

## GRAZING GUIDE

Species	Growth periods	Target Grazing Height (in.)		Grazing recovery period (days)	Comments
		Start grazing	Stop grazing		
<i>Bermudagrass: Common, hybrid &amp; seeded varieties</i>	Apr-May	4-6	2-3	21-30	
	Jun-Jul	4-6	2-3	10-21	
	Aug-Sep	4-6	2-3	20-40	
	Frosted	3+	2-3	Spring	Any frosted grazing should be done prior to leaf deterioration
<i>Bermudagrass: overseeded with small grain (rye, oats, etc.)</i>	Feb-Mar	8-10 (small grain)	3-4	21-30	Target heights directed toward small grain
	Apr-May	6-8	2-3	14-21	Control small grains so Bermuda can emerge
	Jun-Jul	3-5	2-3	10-21	
	Aug-Sep	3-5	2-3	21-30	
	October	3-5	1-2	45-90	Graze Bermuda close during late September to allow emergence of overseeded small grain
	Nov-Jan	6-8 (small grain)	3-4	45-90	Don't allow small grain grazing until target height reached
<i>Kentucky Bluegrass w/ white clover</i>	Mar-May	4-6	2-3	14-30	If clover is White Dutch, then may graze to 1.5"
	Jun-Aug	6-8	2-4	30-45	
	Sep-Oct	6-8	2-3	21-45	
	Nov-Feb	4-6	2-3	Spring	
<i>Crabgrass and associated warm season species</i>	May-Jun	6-8	2-3	14-30	
	Jul-Aug	6-8	2-3	14-30	
	Sep-Oct	4-6	1-2	Replant in Spring	Summer growth may be grazed in fall; quality may be limiting
<i>Fescue or Orchardgrass dominant with or without ladino clover</i>	Feb-Mar	4-6	2-3	30-45	
	Apr-Jun	6-8	3-4	14-30	
	Jul-Aug	6-8	3-4	30-60	
	Sep-Oct	6-8	2-3	21-35	
	Nov-Jan	4-6	2-3	45-90	If clover mix is "stockpiled", clover may be shaded if canopy reaches 10-12" prior to grazing
<i>Fescue (&lt;70%) mixed with bermuda or crabgrass</i>	Feb-Mar	4-6	2-3	30-45	Grazing height of mix during the summer is dictated by climate-favored species. Shorter "stop" heights will favor Bermuda/crabgrass, taller will favor fescue
	Apr-Jun	6-8	2-3	14-30	
	Jul-Aug	6-8	3-4	21-45	
	Sep-Oct	6-8	2-3	21-35	
	Nov-Jan	4-6	2-3	45-90	
<i>Switchgrass, Indiangrass, Big Bluestem</i>	Apr-Jun	14-18	5-7	21-30	Allow plants to reach seed head stage during establishment year prior to grazing
	Jul-Aug	18-22	5-7	21-40	
	Sep-Oct	16-20	8-12	Spring	

Additional information can be found in the complete document Forage Facts: Grazing Guide Located in the eFOTG/Section I/NC Technical References/Pasture and Hayland Folder.