



Plant Enhancement Activity – PLT02 – Monitoring key grazing areas to improve grazing management

State Criteria (same as NATIONAL CRITERIA) with the following clarifications:

Implementation of this enhancement **requires** monitoring key grazing areas to improve grazing management. A key grazing area is a small area of a pasture that is identified as being representative of the entire pasture. Complete the 5 steps listed below:

1. Key grazing areas will be established for each pasture. Identify a key grazing area in each pasture on an aerial photo. Identify key forage plant(s) for each key grazing area. Recommended residual forage heights for common range and pasture plants in Nebraska based on NRCS Prescribed Grazing practice specifications, Table 3 (See Attachment B).
2. Key grazing areas/monitoring sites will be monitored each year. The monitoring method may be chosen from the methods listed on page 2 (Attachment A).
3. Annual monitoring in each pasture will include a landscape view photo during the growing season of the area identified in step 1, refer to: [http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/NE/NE-ECS-2_\(Instructions\).pdf](http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/NE/NE-ECS-2_(Instructions).pdf).
4. A gps point or fixed marker such as a disk blade or other permanent marker will be established in each pasture in order to return to the same monitoring site each year.
5. When measurement of key forage plant heights is selected as one of the monitoring methods (*National criteria 3b*), a grazing exclusion cage will be located at each key area. This provides a reference point to the current years' growth for that site. The cage would be moved each year when the site was monitored.
6. A written documentation of how monitoring data was evaluated and utilized to adjust grazing management plans.

Documentation Requirements (SEE NATIONAL ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY JOBSHEET)

Additional State Documentation Requirements:

- Aerial photo or map of each pasture with the key grazing area clearly identified.
- Annual photograph landscape view of each pastures identified key grazing area (photo point).
- Written documentation of the monitoring data collected, **one or more of the following on Attachment A.:**
- Written documentation of how monitoring data was evaluated and utilized to adjust grazing management plans.

I certify that the following information meets specifications and the necessary documentation has been provided to NRCS:

Certified by: _____ **Date:** _____



ATTACHMENT A

a. Rangeland Apparent Trend

i. See [Nebraska Prescribed Grazing Tool](#) for form and instructions.

b. Rangeland Health Assessment (for rangeland)

i. <http://www.blm.gov/nstc/library/pdf/1734-6.pdf>

ii. http://efotg.nrcs.usda.gov/references/public/NE/NE-ECS-11_Range_Health_Evaluation_Worksheet.pdf

c. Pasture Condition Scoring (for pastureland)

i. See [Nebraska Prescribed Grazing Tool](#) for form and instructions.

d. Plant productivity determinations

i. See [Nebraska Prescribed Grazing Tool](#) for form forage inventory options.

e. Measurements of key forage plant heights (before and after grazing)

i. Suggested pre- and post grazing heights of common Nebraska range and for age grasses are listed on attachment B and are based on NRCS Prescribed Grazing practice specifications (528s).

ii. Example Data Collection Form For Key Forage Plant Heights Before and After Grazing

Pasture	Key Forage Plant	Livestock In Date	Key Forage Plant Height Before	Livestock Out Date	Key Forage Plant Height After



ATTACHMENT B

^{1/} **Table 3. Recommendations for Beginning and Ending Grazing (Heights and Dates) for Nebraska Pastures**

Species	Begin Grazing		End Grazing	
	^{2/} Minimum Height of Vegetative Growth (inches)	Approximate Date*	^{2/} Minimum Residual Height (inches)	^{2/} Minimum Residual Height Before Killing Frost (inches)
Alfalfa, Alsike & red clover	6	May 15	3	6
Big & Sand bluestem	10	June 1	6	10
Birdsfoot trefoil	6	June 1	3	6
Cicer milkvetch	8	May 20	5	8
Creeping foxtail	6	May 1	3	6
Crested wheatgrass	4	April 20	3	6
Eastern gamagrass	18-20	June 1	8	10
Indiangrass	10	June 1	4	10
Intermediate wheatgrass	6	May 1	5	8
Meadow brome	6	May 1	5	6
Orchardgrass	6	May 1	5	8
Pubescent wheatgrass	6	May 1	5	6
Reed canarygrass	8	May 1	4	8
Russian wildrye	6	May 1	3	4
Smooth brome	6	May 1	4	7
Switchgrass	10	June 1	6	10
Tall fescue	6	May 1	3	6
Tall wheatgrass	7	May 1	4	8
Timothy	6	June 1	4	5
Western wheatgrass	6	May 1	3	6

^{1/} Height is the average height when **leaves** are lifted in a vertical position. ^{2/} In Vegetative Zone I, the Panhandle of Nebraska, all heights listed in Table 3 should be adjusted downward by 25% for all species.

References

USDA/NRCS-Kansas. Monitoring The Grass - Grass Grown vs. Grass Grazed | Kansas NRCS by Roger W. Tacha, Resource Conservationist, Natural Resources Conservation Service , Colby, Kansas http://www.ks.nrcs.usda.gov/news/coneds10/Monitoring_The_Grassnr1rt_1109.html

[Monitoring Manual for Grassland, Shrubland and Savanna Ecosystems, Volume 1: Quick Start. By Jeffrey E. Herrick, et.al., USDA – ARS Jornada Experimental Range., Las Cruces, New Mexico](#)