



CONSERVATION ENHANCEMENT ACTIVITY

E5280 (with Montana Supplement)

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM

Clipping mature forages to set back vegetative growth for improved forage quality

Conservation Practice 528: Prescribed Grazing

APPLICABLE LAND USE: Pasture

RESOURCE CONCERN: Animals, Plants

ENHANCEMENT LIFE SPAN: 1 year

Enhancement Description

Timely clipping of mature forages through mowing, swathing, or some other mechanical cutting will occur to increase forage palatability by setting plants back to a vegetative state for improved grazing management and forage quality

Criteria

- A written plan for matching the forage quantity and quality produced with the grazing and/or browsing demand will be followed.
- Maintain diversity of forage plants to optimize delivery of nutrients to the animals by incorporating the intensity, frequency, timing and duration of grazing and/or browsing needed as determined by a planning process that includes: 1) Clear objectives, 2) A resource inventory including forage inventory, structural improvements and existing resource conditions, 3) Grazing plan, and 4) All potential contingency plans.
- Supplemental feed and/or minerals will be balanced with the forage consumption to meet the desired nutritional level for the kind and class of grazing and/or browsing livestock.

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- Timely clipping of mature forage species through mowing, swathing or some other mechanical cutting will occur to set back the vegetative state of the forage species.
- Excessive stems shall be removed during the cutting process to allow sunlight to reach the lower plant canopy.
- Cut forage species to a stubble height that will promote the vigor and health of the species and maintain stem bases that store food reserves for full vigorous recovery. **Refer to MT CPS 511 and CPS 528 standard and specifications**
- Clipping should be avoided when forage is entering dormancy. Cutting heights should maintain insulation for extreme heat or cold. Use NRCS and local Cooperative Extension Service recommendations on dates and stages to avoid winterkill in cold climates.



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Documentation and Implementation Requirements

Participant will:

- Y Prior to implementation, acquire a Grazing Management Plan with all the following components: (provide plan to NRCS for review and approval)
 - o Producer goals, objectives and resource concerns
 - o Location and condition of structural improvements
 - o Watering sites with availability, quantity and quality
 - o Forage inventory
 - o Forage-animal balance sheet
 - o Grazing plan for livestock movement
 - o Contingency plan
 - o Monitoring plan
- Y Prior to implementation, identify grazing areas and locations where clipping mature forages will occur
- Y Prior to implementation, provide a plan for mechanical clipping and livestock movement activities to NRCS
- Y During implementation keep a record of clipping activities and livestock movement
- Y During implementation, monitor forage maturity stages and livestock condition
- Y During implementation, keep record of clipping heights
- Y During implementation, take photos of areas immediately before and after clipping
- Y After implementation, provide the following items for review by NRCS:
 - o Map and records showing clipping areas
 - o Forage-animal balance sheet
 - o Records of livestock movement through clipping areas
 - o Documentation of clipping heights
 - o Written modifications to grazing management plan based on results of clipping forages
 - o Photos of fields before and after clipping activities
 - o Notify NRCS immediately after clipping

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NRCS will:

- Y As needed, provide technical assistance to participant as requested
- Y Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Prescribed Grazing (CPS 528) as it relates to implementing this enhancement
- Y Prior to implementation, provide and explain NRCS Conservation Practice Standard Forage Harvest Management (CPS 511)
- Y Prior to implementation, review the plan provided for livestock movement and mechanical clipping
- Y After implementation, review the map, record of livestock movement, clipping activities and heights and photos.
- Y After implementation, review the modifications to the grazing management plan based on results of clipping forages

NRCS Documentation Review:

I have reviewed all required participant documentation and have determined the participant has implemented the enhancement and met all criteria and requirements.

Participant Name _____ Contract Number _____

Total Amount Applied _____ Fiscal Year Completed _____

NRCS Technical Adequacy Signature Date