

POLK COUNTY GRAZIER

April 11, 2022



*An eNewsletter by the Rich Mountain
Conservation District*

Jim Gerrish is considered by many to be one of the foremost grazing experts and speakers on rotational grazing in the United States. His book "**Management-intensive Grazing** *the Grassroots of Grass Farming*" is a practical guide that should be on every grazer's nightstand. It can be purchased here: [Management-intensive Grazing by Jim Gerrish — American GrazingLands Services LLC](#). The below article is adapted from Chapter 26.

Everybody Needs a Little Rest and Recuperation

Adapted from: "Management – intensive Grazing" (2004) by Jim Gerrish

Why do businesses provide employees with paid vacation? If you think it is because your employers are really wonderful people who care about you as an individual human being, guess again. It is probably because all the studies on worker productivity show that employees are more productive if allowed some R&R occasionally. The same concept applies to your pastures. They will be more productive and stable if allowed a little R&R. Which brings up the big question. How much rest and how often is it required?

“Pastures will be more productive and stable if allowed to rest and regrow”

The bottom line is rest can be fairly minimal in soft environments but had better be more extended in hard environments. We find that pasture in fine weather needs a lot less rest than pasture in foul weather. Now a pasture's idea of foul weather may be a little different than yours, but it is surprising similar regarding temperature. The one big difference is that pastures tend to like those damp, rainy days a lot more than we do.

Rest is critical for maintaining pasture vigor and productivity. When a pasture is rested several things occur. The first and foremost is that the plant has the opportunity to grow more leaves. Leaves are the critical component of the photosynthetic process, which provides plants with energy to live. From energy generated in photosynthesis, the plant may grow more leaves, stems, and roots, or may deposit energy as stored carbohydrates in various parts of the plant. The basis for the length of the rest period is how much time is required for the plant to reach a positive stored carbohydrate balance.

When growing conditions are favorable, meaning near optimum temperatures, adequate soil moisture, and appropriate fertility, photosynthesis is very efficient and regrowth is rapid. As any one or more of the growing conditions shifts away from optimum, the rest period must be extended for the plant to regrow.

Because legumes usually rely on stored carbohydrates for regrowth, they can be grazed shorter than grasses and still recover rapidly. The shorter grazing reduces the photosynthetic advantage of the grass by restricting available leaf area the two species grow back fairly uniformly. Repeatedly grazing to short residual favors legumes in a rest period while leaving taller residuals will favor grasses. In regions where both warm and cool season forages grow together, changes in growing temperature and soil moisture can rapidly shift the balance of power away from cool-season to warm-season species. Maintaining a balance in mixed pastures is one of the most challenging tasks for a grazer requiring frequent adjustments to rest period timing and duration.

How the pasture has been treated earlier in the season or even in previous years, particularly in brittle environments, also has a profound effect on rest period requirement. If a pasture has been used lightly early in the season, it can be grazed with a shorter summer rest period without unduly affecting vigor or production.

How much rest are you giving your pastures? Why? Can changing your rest pattern change your pasture composition to something more desirable?

The value of having more pastures (paddocks):

Number of paddocks	Days in each paddock	Harvest efficiency
1	continuous	30-35%
4-6	6-12	40-45%
8-12	3-5	50-60%
12-24	1-2	60-70%

This chart shows that having 1 field with no rotations or rest periods results in a harvest efficiency of only 30-35%. Adding more pastures and more rest increases the harvest efficiency and regrowth dramatically. When conditions are favorable, pastures should normally be grazed less than 1 week and have a minimum of 3-6 weeks of rest. A bare minimum of 4 pastures are needed to allow 3 weeks of rest if the grazing period is 1 week. Each additional pasture can increase the rest period and increase the harvest efficiency. Often, this can be achieved by simply closing gates but sometimes may require the addition of new fences.

"Take Care of the Land and the Land will Take Care of You"

LOOK -----> On Friday April 1, 2022 the Rich Mountain and Cossatot Conservation Districts hosted their annual forestry contest. We were assisted by the Arkansas

Forestry Division, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, USDA Farm Service Agency and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. It was held at Bogg Springs Baptist Camp, we appreciate Doug Curtis allowing us the use of the beautiful property. There were 8 schools in attendance with a total of 87 students participating in Forestry, Land Judging, and a Wildlife Contest.

Each year the Rich Mountain and Cossatot Conservation Districts team up to sponsor competitions among area FFA teams to demonstrate their knowledge of natural resources. These events help to teach the participants about the importance of our natural resources by learning about forestry, land (soils), and wildlife. The winning teams and individuals receive plaques and other special prizes for their accomplishments. A special thank you to the FFA/ag instructors who take the time to teach our next generation about these important concepts.

Forestry Team results: 1st Mt Ida, 2nd

Cossatot River, 3rd Mena

Forestry Individual results: 1st Jacob

Woodfield-Mt Ida, 2nd Ian McDowell-Mt Ida,

3rd Gracia Huitt-Mt Ida

Land Judging Team results: 1st Dierks, 2nd

DeQueen, 3rd Foreman

Land Judging Individual results: 1st Carley Klitz-Foreman, 2nd Jackson Fennell-Dierks, 3rd Gavin Bailey-Dierks

Wildlife Judging Team results: 1st Cossatot River, 2nd Mt Ida, 3rd Mena

Wildlife Judging Individual results: 1st Andy Black-Mt Ida, 2nd Cooper Hayes-Cossatot River, 3rd Easton Johnson-Cossatot River



Mt Ida won 1st place at team at the Rich Mtn/Cossatot Forestry Contest on April 1st, 2022 (pictured).

The High Point Individual for Forestry was Jacob Woodfield of Mt Ida (pictured on left).



Cossatot River won 1st place at the Rich Mtn/Cossatot Wildlife Contest on April 1st, 2022 (pictured).

The High Point Individual for Wildlife was Andy Black of Mt Ida (not pictured).

Upcoming Grazing Meetings and Seminars:

⇒ **Tomorrow! April 12, 2022 – Fertilizer Outlook & Considerations 2022 (1PM—online seminar)**

You are invited to attend the weekly grazing training sessions by Jeremy Huff, the USDA/NRCS state grazing specialist. He offers these training sessions as a Zoom meeting and the instructions for logging in are included in attached flyer. If you have the Zoom app on your phone you can just scan the QR code on the flyer. If you want to watch the presentation on your computer there is a link included in the attachment. The sessions are normally every Tuesday at 1pm so **see the attached flyer.**

⇒ **May 20-21, 2022 – 2022 Beef Stockman & Stewardship**

Topics include: cattle handling and care, nutrition, environmental stewardship, herd health. To be held at the Wickes Community Center 9:30am-2:30pm with a meal provided. For more information contact the Polk County

Extension Office at 479-394-6018 or by email at sbeaty@uada.edu See attached flyer.

⇒ **The National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT)** is a national organization started in 1976 to provide sustainable agriculture technology information to small farmers. Their events page includes many online and in-person agriculture training events from around the country: www.ncat.org/events/. Here is also a link to their very popular sustainable agriculture training program for military veterans: www.armedtofarm.org.

**Rich Mountain
Conservation
District**

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Take a picture with your cell phone to visit the RMCD website —>



DID YOU KNOW?

Archived copies of the "POLK COUNTY GRAZIER" are now available on the Rich Mtn. Conservation District website at:

[Publications - Rich Mountain Conservation District \(rmcd.org\)](http://www.rmcd.org)

Sent on behalf of the Rich Mtn Conservation District.
Thanks for your interest in grazing management and
conservation,

Steve Swall

District Conservationist
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
Mena Service Center (Polk & Montgomery Counties)
(479)437-6054

*Please reply to unsubscribe if you do not wish to receive this
newsletter.*

The Tuesday Pasture Talk

Learn about Pasture
Topics with us



Anyone is
welcome to join



April 5, 2022 1:00pm CST	April 12, 2022 1:00pm CST	April 19, 2022 1:00pm CST	April 26, 2022 1:00pm CST
Virtual Fencing	Fertilizer Outlook & Considerations 2022	How Visuals Influence the Social Acceptability of Conservation	Interactive Conservation Planning Pasture Exercise
Presenter: Dr. Kevin Wagner, Director, Oklahoma Water Resources Center & Dr. Ryan Reuter, Professor, OSU Department of Animal and Food Sciences	Presenter: Dr. Trent Roberts, Associate Professor of Soil Fertility/Soil Testing, University of Arkansas	Presenter: Jessica Espenshade, Conservation Outreach Manager, National Wildlife Federation	Presenter: Jeremy Huff, AR NRCS State Grazing Lands Specialist

Expect to Learn:



What is virtual fencing and what research/demonstrations are being conducted with virtual fencing.



Get the latest on the fertilizer outlook for 2022 and what producers should consider.



Can images in magazines, websites and social media pages influence how you feel about conservation? The discussion may surprise you!



Hear a producer's objectives, determine resource concerns on the site, and discuss alternatives to address resource concerns.

Join by these Methods:

Direct Link:

[Click Here
to Join](#)

Phone:



Website:

Zoom
Meeting ID: 864
3159 1009
Passcode: 059742

Questions or
Comments:

jeremy.huff@usda.gov
or (501) 413-0527



MAY 20TH OR 21ST

**CLASSROOM &
OUTDOOR
ACTIVITIES**

MEAL PROVIDED

2022

BEEF STOCKMAN & STEWARDSHIP

**Wickes Community
Center 9:30a- 2:30p
Limit 25 people/day
Register by May 11th**

REGISTRATION:

(479)394-6018

Topics will include

**Cattle Handling & Care
Biosecurity
Herd Health
Transportation
Nutrition**

Environmental Stewardship

**Worker Safety
Emergency Action Plan**

**You will be BQA Certified at
completion**