



This newsletter is a joint effort from the following organizations:



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## Pasture Grazing Rental Rates

University of Minnesota Extension Regional Educator David Bau has this to say in the University of Minnesota Extension Farm Resource Guide 2014.

Pasture grazing rents have ranged from:

\$12.00 - \$90.00 per acre, or

20 -70 cents per cow unit per day, or

\$8.00 - \$21.00 per cow unit per month, depending upon pasture quality. There are both higher and lower rents than listed here and is subject to local demand and supply.

The average is:

\$35.00 per acre, or

40 - 50 cents per cow unit per day, or

\$12.00 - \$15.00 per cow unit per month (1000 lb. beef cow).

You can adjust these figures for other classes of livestock; multiply by 30% for a calf (3-6 months old), 50% for a calf (6-12 months), 75% for yearlings, 125% for a bull or a horse, and 20% for a ewe.

**Cattle Owner:** Cattle owners are responsible to keep the fences in good repair, and are also responsible for all costs associated with weed control. They also check their cattle and pay for the electricity required to water the animals.

**Landlord:** Landlords supply the fence posts and wire. They will find less over-grazing of the pasture if they use a per animal, rather than per acre leases.



## Mob Grazing

John Zinn, USDA/NRCS Grazing Specialist

The idea of Mob Grazing started as part of holistic management advocated by Allen Savory in the 1980's and continuing today. It has been used more often in dry, brittle, environments but in the last ten years has been used in Missouri and other Midwestern states. Mob grazing requires stocking at very high densities, as much as 250,000 pounds per acre. Livestock move two to three times per day and often are grazing headed out pasture. The paddocks are grazed twice per season in Missouri.



**Photo shows Mob Grazing at 140,000 pound per acre stocking density.**

Forage is either consumed or trampled. The goal is for the livestock to consume half and leave half of the forage. Trampling brings vegetation in contact with the soil which stimulates microorganisms which increase nutrient cycling. Increased nutrient cycling increases availability of plant nutrients. Soil fungi grow an elaborate net of branches which transport nutrients and certain types of fungi secrete glues that improve soil structure and provide for durable soil

aggregates. Soil aggregates allow for better infiltration, better available water holding capacity, and resist erosion.

Producers who have adopted mob grazing claim that it increases pasture productivity, species diversity, and overall profitability. Moving the livestock is not a problem and one practitioner claims that it only takes him 30 minutes per day to move his cattle twice. To reduce the time spent setting up fences, he sets up all the paddocks with polywire that he will need for the entire week in one day. All he needs to do is to open and close gates, checking the water supplies as he goes.

Starting mob grazing requires that some of the pasture or hayland gets deferred from either haying or grazing. Reducing herd size may be necessary at first, but users of mob grazing report that after a few years they actually can increase their stocking rates. Unfortunately these claims have not been researched to verify them.

Mob grazing requires planning, patience and careful observations. Some of the labor can be reduced by laying out the paddocks ahead of time and good recordkeeping can pay dividends. If you are interested in mob grazing or are currently using it, we're looking to get more information about it.

# Dealing with Maternity Pastures

John Zinn, USDA/NRCS Grazing Specialist

I was standing in line at our local farm supply store and ran into a neighbor. Due to the weather last year he decided that his herd would calve in April this year. Mud in his calving area forced him to move his cows into one of his grazing paddocks. He's concerned about the future of that paddock and what to do with it after he gets done calving.

## Calving /Lambing Pasture

Conditions on these pastures can vary depending on the condition of the sod when the animals were turned out, local rainfall, stock density, time on the pasture, soil type, and the type or distribution of the feed. Sheep and goats don't cause as much hoof damage but they will overgraze. I have seen these areas recover when it seemed impossible that they would and I have seen them grow up in thistles. Here are some recommendations for dealing with these areas depending on their condition after use.

Condition of Calving/Lambing Pasture After Use	Date	Management Recommendations
Greater than 50% Bare Ground and/or Spoiled Feed Noxious weeds present in 20% or less of paddock	May-June	Spread spoiled feed out if thicker than 1" Remove livestock, allow forage to head out Spot treat noxious weeds
	July-August	Use as sacrifice paddock.
	Sept- following spring	Remove livestock in September to build reserves Spot treat noxious weeds
Greater than 50% Bare Ground and/or Spoiled Feed Noxious weeds present in 20% or more of paddock	May-June	Non selective herbicides or tillage followed by Seeding Warm Season Grazing/cover crop mix* Take soil samples if no current samples available Correct deficiencies
	July-September	Graze warm season mixture
	Following Spring	Reseed pasture
Less than 50% Bare Ground and/or Spoiled Feed	May-June	Spread spoiled feed out if thicker than 1"
	June-July	Allow forages to head out before grazing Try Mob Grazing? Spot treat noxious weeds
	Sept-following spring	Remove livestock to build reserves

\*Summer annual options include Brown Midrib Hybrid Sudangrass @ 35# per acre, Brown Midrib Sorghum-Sudangrass hybrids @ 35# per acre, Pearl Millet @ 12-15 pounds per acre. Try adding soybeans, cow peas, fava beans or other legumes to this as diversity improves soil health benefits and forage quality. Note: supplies of summer annuals and legumes have been limited in the past.

## Spring Turnout Guidelines

If possible let animals out on pasture when they are solid, firm and at least 4" tall. As one experienced grazer says, "First thing in the spring, I wait to turn out until I can see the grass waving in the breeze and then I move them when the grass gets down to 2." It will be tempting for some to turn the animals out on pasture too early this year, but there are consequences:

1. Potential for increased compaction which will decrease the effective rooting zone.
2. Excessive early grazing will reduce the root reserves of the grass resulting in less vigorous, slower growing forage.
3. If the animals cause excessive pugging in the pasture this will open up the pasture to a weed invasion that may take years to control.

Weather patterns such as those we've experienced this year provide motivation to manage our resources closely. If you would like assistance evaluating maternity pastures and would like someone to bounce ideas off of, please contact your local Extension Office, Dean Thomas with the Fillmore SWCD (507) 765-3879, EXT. 128, or John Zinn with NRCS (507)289-7454, EXT 115.

# Olson Fencing



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