

Silvopasture with Walnuts

The pasture that the trail goes through contains many naturally occurring walnut trees that are spaced far enough apart to allow grass to grow between the trees. This is a practice known as silvopasture, which is the combination of timber production and grazing. The trees provide shade for the cattle, and the low density of the trees allows grass to grow so the cattle can graze. On one area of land, cattle can graze and trees can be grown for timber. Some grasses, especially bluegrass, can tolerate the toxic compound that leaches from walnut roots and foliage. Unlike most trees, walnut can tolerate soil



compaction and root injuries from grazing without decay.

Silvopasture systems are more complex and need more management than ordinary pasture systems, but they provide two income sources from the same piece of land and can work very well if managed correctly. Silvopastures provide an annual income from the grazers, and a future income from the timber sales. Cattle can use the grass and shade, while the pasture also produces some valuable timber.

Walnut trees growing in a pasture among the grass the cattle graze

MORE RESOURCES:

Silvopasture

USDA National Agroforestry Center

<http://www.unl.edu/nac/silvopasture.htm>

Silvopasture—An agroforestry practice

USDA National Agroforestry Center

<http://www.unl.edu/nac/workingtrees/wts.pdf>

Fire and Silvopasture

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<http://www.unl.edu/nac/insideagroforestry/2002fall.pdf>