

The Essentials of Pasture Management

United States Department 1011 East Main, Suite 106
of Agriculture Puyallup, Washington 98372
Natural Resources Phone: 253-845-9272
Conservation Service FAX: 253-845-4569

1. Livestock are merely harvesters of the primary crop, forage. A healthy forage crop ensures healthy, thriving livestock.
2. Livestock should only graze each plant once during each grazing cycle. Subdivide pastures as needed and rotate livestock to fresh pastures often in order to achieve this.
3. Never, never, never graze below minimum stubble height:
 - 3 inches for bunch grasses (orchardgrass, ryegrass, tall fescue)
 - 2 inches for sod grasses (bluegrass and bentgrass)
4. Never, never, never put livestock or equipment on wet soil.
5. Provide fertilizer to meet BUT NOT EXCEED crop needs.
6. MANURE IS FREE FERTILIZER! Use it first, and don't put it where, when, or in amounts that you wouldn't put commercial fertilizer.
7. Bare soil is generally a symptom of a livestock distribution or overpopulation problem. Figure out the cause and fix it because:
8. Bare soil does not stay bare. Something will grow there. Something often obnoxious, but possibly noxious or poisonous.
9. Weeds are usually the result of ignoring # 1 - #7. Practice # 1 - #7, mow, hoe, pull, wick, wipe, or spray as needed, and keep practicing # 1 - #7.
10. Reseeding is always the last resort. It's expensive and ties up acreage for several months. Give the current stand a year (or two) of intensive management (see above) first and see if it improves adequately.

A seed mix should contain species suited to the site, for the use (forage or hay production), and to each other (height, growing season, and palatability).

Pierce Conservation District

1011 East Main, Suite 106
Puyallup, WA 98372
Phone: (253) 845-9770
Fax: (253) 845-4569
Toll Free: (866) 845-9485
E-mail: info@piercecountycd.org

