

SHARP BROS. SEED CO.

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RANGELAND GRAZING

CONSERVATION QUARTERLY

DEER TRAIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT AND EAST ADAMS CONSERVATION DISTRICT
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The key to having productive pastures is proper pasture management. Close observation and moving cattle when your grass gets low is essential for plant reproduction. In our area, we receive on average between 12 - 14 inches of moisture per year and our growing season is between 120 - 150 days. Overgrazing happens when animals are left in one place too long and they continually eat the plant re-growth and trample stressed plants. The plants will eventually become weak and weeds will begin to establish and take over.

The best method to ensure proper pasture utilization is to go from a single pasture to two or more pastures to allow the grass to rest. Grasses need to rest during the growing season to replenish carbohydrate reserves and produce new growth. A

good method to use is the take-half-leave-half method. This simply means when the animal grazes half of the plants height on average per pasture, move them to another pasture.

Leaving adequate vegetation above ground allows the plant to collect the needed sunlight and nutrients to carry it over to the next growing season. During wet years and fast grass growth, rest each pasture for at least 30 days. During slow growth, rest each pasture from 60 - 90 days. And in drought condition like we experienced this year, rest each pasture 90 days or longer. Close observation, rotating your cattle between pastures, and allowing adequate rest periods are necessary to maintain a healthy, vigorous stand of grass.