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CC167 How to Use Pastures

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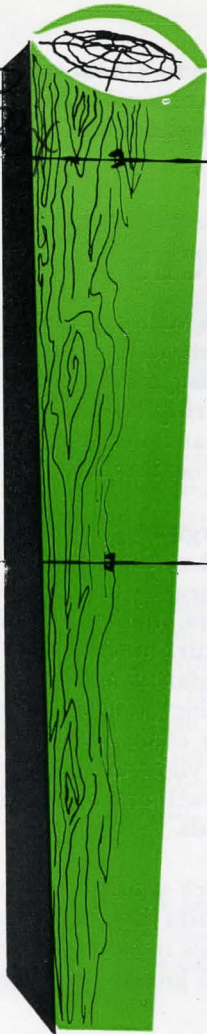
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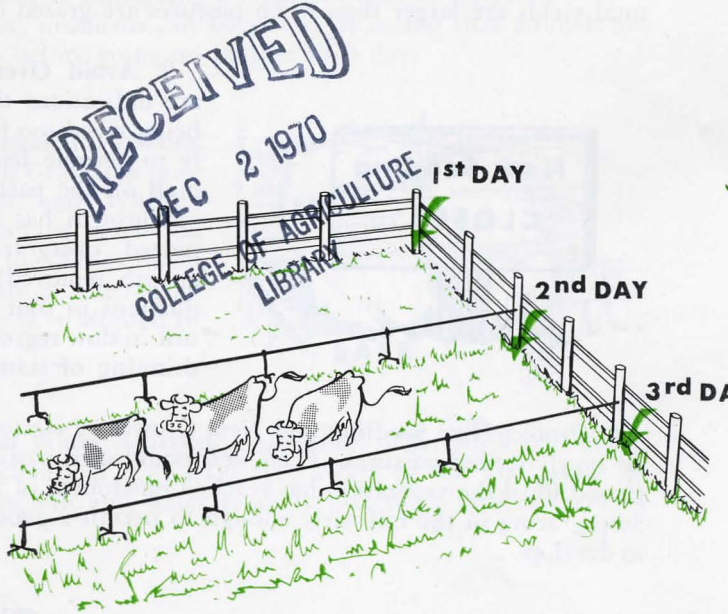
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PRODUCTIVE PASTURES JUN 17 1988



HOW TO USE PASTURES



Proper Grazing Encourages

- Growth of desirable grasses and legumes.
- Pasture plants to grow actively throughout season.

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COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE COOPERATING W. V. Lambert, Director

Proper grazing management is essential if we expect to obtain maximum yields from any pasture. Overgrazing is one of the most common faults in pasture management. It not only reduces the yields, but often eliminates the most desirable pasture plants.

GOOD GRAZING PRACTICES

1. **Use Rotation or Alternate Grazing.** Better yields of forage, hence greater production of milk or meat can be obtained by dividing a pasture into several parts and grazing the parts in rotation. Enough fields should be provided so that each has a rest of 2 to 3 weeks during the season.

Not only do livestock like fresh forage better and eat more of it, but total yields are larger than when pastures are grazed continuously.



2. **Avoid Overgrazing.** If there are indications that the pasture is being razed too heavily and is likely to become bare, take your animals off the pasture until a vigorous growth has started again. Repeated overgrazing (60-70% top growth removed) causes severe reductions in root vigor and will result in slow regrowth and a gradual thinning of stands.

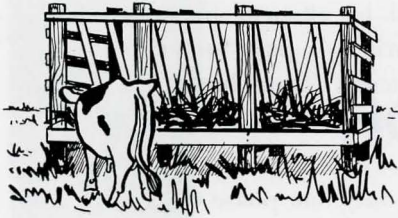
3. **Protect New Seeding and New Growth.** Livestock should be kept off newly seeded pastures. Even well established pastures should not be grazed until the vegetation has reached one-fourth of its normal growth. Stop grazing in the fall early enough to permit a good growth of forage to develop.

4. **Clip Pastures.** Clipping pastures following grazing will encourage uniform new growth and is a definite aid to weed control. It is desirable to leave a 4-inch stubble.



5. **Spread Droppings.** It is worthwhile to drag or harrow pastures to spread droppings. This is particularly important when grazing is very intensive.

6. **Avoid Extensive Trampling of Pastures.** When pastures are extremely wet, due to natural moisture or irrigation, animals should be fed in dry lot and kept off the pastures.



animals are on pastures containing a large per cent of legumes.

Many times bloat problems can be solved by seeing that animals are fed dry roughages before going on pasture each day.

8. **Use Recommended Varieties.**

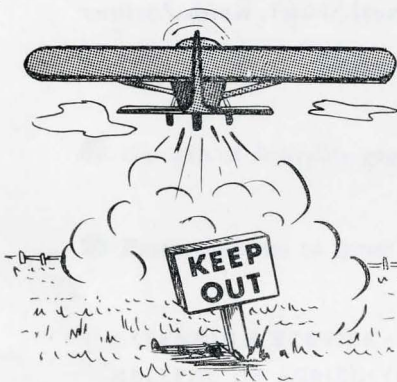
In the use of Sudan Grass, use pure seed of the Piper and Wheeler varieties. They contain much less prussic acid than the Texas Sweet varieties. Use caution when grazing Sudan that has been stunted by frost or drought.

7. **Have Dry Roughage Available For Animals On Pasture.** When livestock first go on pasture in the spring, having dry roughage available often keeps them "on feed" until they get used to the pasture forage.

If bloat is a problem, dry roughages act as a safety factor when



9. **Have Salt and Water Available.** All classes of livestock will utilize pasture more efficiently if they have free access to salt and water on pasture. Relocating salt and water tends to give more uniform pasture utilization.



10. **Avoid Grazing Pasture Recently Sprayed for Weed or Insect Control.** Follow the recommendations of your county agent, weed district supervisor and those named on label of product used when grazing pastures that have been sprayed recently.

REMEMBER . . .

Any pasture must be utilized by efficient livestock in order to be a profitable enterprise. It pays to use high-producing livestock that are efficient forage harvesters, as they usually harvest pasture forage much more efficiently than low producers.

The proper use of pasture is only one phase of pasture management. Weed control, fertilization, irrigation, use of temporary pastures, establishment, proper choice of forage varieties, insect control, and the overall economics of pasture on your particular farm are all important factors to consider. Listed below are some of the other publications of this series that are designed to help you improve your pasture program.

1. Using Temporary Pastures (CC 164)
2. Establishing Pastures in Nebraska (CC 165)
3. Choice of Perennial Grasses for Forage Production and Erosion Control (CC 166)
4. How to Use Pastures (CC 167)

This circular is a publication of the **Pasture Committee** of the **Nebraska College of Agriculture**. It was prepared by Phillip Cole, M. A. Alexander, Neal Shafer, Keith Zoellner and Don Clanton.