

## High Pressure Strip Grazing - Progress

Earlier this spring I told you that I was giving my cattle fresh strips of pasture three times a day to better use the grass that got away. Here's an update. When I started strip grazing my pastures in June as the grass was all heading out, I wasn't exactly sure what to expect. Here's what has happened so far.

The animals adapted almost immediately to the smaller area to graze. They pretty much stay together as a single herd, except for the one cow who thinks she's a deer and leaps over the electric cross fence. But even she stays close by so I generally leave her alone.

It works good when it's dry. They move into the fresh strip and start grazing, eating about half of what's there and trampling down much of the rest. I was a little worried that mature grass might not be high enough quality for them but by selective grazing the cows have stayed in good flesh, calves are growing well, and their manure has remained reasonably soft, indicating adequate protein in their diet.

On rainy days it takes a bit more land area. The cows don't like to eat the grass that quickly gets muddied up. So I've learned to either give them a bigger area with each move or move more often. I am curious to see how the pasture changes with this new grazing strategy. Recovery periods will be nearly twice as long and regrowth is developing nicely. Since all the legumes and grasses produced mature seed, I'm hopeful that I'll end up with more clover and thicker stands.

I also think I'm increasing the organic matter of my soil, what with all the forage trampled down by the high density of animals. Time will tell if high density strip grazing works well with pastures dominated by brome and legumes. So far, it looks pretty good.

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