

## High Pressure Strip Grazing

How are your pastures looking? Mine aren't to pretty this year. Grass got way ahead of me so now I'm changing my grazing strategy to try and use it effectively. A big pasture management challenge is keeping grass from heading out, becoming less palatable and low quality. This spring I didn't do to good. So now I'm going to change how I graze the rest of the year.

Normally I place cows in a paddock for two to five days, then move to a fresh paddock. If I did that now with all the headed out grass, they'd just strip some leaves, trample a lot of forage, and leave most of the stems standing. They'd probably end up eating only about one-fourth of the potential forage available.

So I'm going to pressure them into eating more of the plant by limiting how much choice they have. Instead of giving them the entire paddock to graze for several days, I'm going to use electric fence to limit them to very tiny areas at a time.

How tiny you ask? My initial goal is to put the equivalent of about 250,000 pounds of cattle on just one acre. That's about 150 to 200 cow-calf pairs per acre. It won't take them long to finish off that small area, obviously, so I expect to give them a fresh strip about three times a day. With that high density of animals, I hope they will use over half of the forage compared to the one-fourth they would eat otherwise.

I will let the animals walk back to water over previously grazed strips for a couple days before changing locations. It will take a little adjustment to get just the right size and water placement but after a couple days it should go smoothly. If all goes well, I'll get more cow-days of grazing with less waste. I'll let you know later how well it's working.

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