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WINDROW GRAZING TO STRETCH SUMMER PASTURE

Most areas received abundant rain this spring, producing more pasture growth than cattle could keep up with. Even with that abundance, though, some pastures are getting pretty short, especially with the recent heat and dry weather.

Suppose your pastures receive very little rain for the rest of the year. How long could your pastures continue to provide adequate feed for your animals? Like most folks, you would probably run out several weeks before corn stalks or winter pastures are ready for grazing. Either your animals would be forced to rough it until new grazing becomes available or you would have to feed them hay.

So what can you do now to stretch your current pastures and lower that risk of running out later this year? Of course, one option might be to cut and bale some of your pasture for feeding later on to reduce the amount of waste that naturally occurs when grazing. But another option that might work even better could be windrow grazing.

To try windrow grazing, cut and windrow the amount of pasture your animals might need for about a week. Then build an electric cross fence that gives them just a day or two's worth. When they finish that piece, move the fence to give them some more windrows. As they near the end of the windrows you already cut, lay down another patch and repeat this strip grazing of windrows as long as you wish.

Other graziers have found that windrow grazing sometimes doubles the number of grazing days compared to regular rotational grazing. If you need more pasture, maybe it can work for you, too.

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