

## WINDROW GRAZING TO EXTEND GRAZING, PRESERVE QUALITY

How do you handle pastures that grow too fast? That's what brome, bluegrass, and other cool-season grasses have done lately. There are several options.

Your first option, obviously, is to graze them as you normally do. In all likelihood, though, your animals will refuse to eat much of the lower quality stemmy growth and also trample a bunch, wasting a lot of potential feed.

To improve grazing results a little bit, move animals through multiple pastures very quickly. Fast moves can accomplish two things. First, animals moved frequently into fresh pasture will have more chances to select the best quality forage to graze. And second, more leaves are left behind to encourage more rapid regrowth. Extra cross fencing might be needed, though, to assure sufficient recovery periods.

Another obvious way to conserve extra growth is by cutting hay from parts of the pasture. Normally I try to avoid extra hay cutting but if you have the equipment, along with some time, cutting hay for use later in summer or winter is a good option.

A combination of haying and grazing called windrow grazing might be the best option. To try it, first cut and windrow about a week's worth of pasture. Then build an electric cross fence that gives animals access to just a couple days worth of these windrows. 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 or can.

Windrow grazing sometimes doubles the number of grazing days compared to regular grazing because less forage is wasted by trampling. Maybe it can work for you, too.

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