

MOB GRAZING MISCONCEPTIONS

I'm doing something a little bit different today. I'm getting on my soap box to complain about the overuse of the term 'mob grazing'.

Mob grazing is a popular name for ultra-high stock density grazing. It's so popular, though, that many folks think they are mob grazing when they simply are strip grazing or rotating very rapidly.

What is meant by 'ultra-high' is debatable but many folks consider about three hundred thousand pounds of animals per acre as the minimum to qualify for this category. That means you need the equivalent of around two hundred or more cow-calf pairs per acre.

Two hundred pairs will eat four to five tons of forage each day so they can stay on that small piece of ground for only a brief time. In fact, this mob of animals often is moved to fresh pasture several times each day.

Mob grazing can increase forage utilization. Since animals don't have much chance to graze selectively when tightly crowded they eat most of what they can get to. It also improves nutrient cycling as animals trample lots of grass into the soil and spread manure quite uniformly across the small area they are grazing.

Both goals are accomplished best when yield is quite high, often when grass is at heading. If short grass is mob grazed, the mob needs to be moved many times each day to satisfy intake demand. Less trampling occurs and manure may not get spread as evenly since animals often move to a new area before they make a fresh deposit.

So, mob grazing usually is not a season-long method of grazing. Instead, it often works best when there is much stemmy growth. You might use it for a couple of months, or maybe only a few days. Primarily use it as a way to rejuvenate overgrown pasture.

Used correctly, mob grazing can help almost everyone.

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