# IAMP—Prescribed Grazing (within NRCS Code 528)

**Description**: Grazing cattle on private lands with cover crops, forage vegetation, and/or crop stubble to achieve specific ecological, economic, and management objectives, including improving soil health and potentially reducing inorganic fertilizer. Priority will be given to acreage that increases the feed value for the cattle while improving economic returns and the soil health on cropland with cover crops or other diversified crop mixes such as interseeding practices. To a limited extent, enrollment will include grazing on alfalfa, pastureland, or other forage crops. These will be limited to acreage caps and subject to approval by the IAMP advisory team. See NRCS Prescribed Grazing (Code 528, and CPPE 528).

**Benefits**: Improves or maintains species composition, structure, and vigor of plant communities; Maintains or improves forage quality and quantity for grazing animals' health, supporting efficient animal growth and reducing time to market; Improves or maintains surface and subsurface water quality; supports riparian and watershed function; reduces soil erosion and supports soil health; enhances food and cover for wildlife; manages fine fuel loads; provides potential additional income for producers adopting cover crops or other crops that cannot be harvested for income.

**Soil Health Benefits**: Can lead to improved soil organic matter and enhanced vegetative cover on grazed acres.

**Risks to Producers**:

- Costs associated with grazing infrastructure and labor.
- Weather-dependent grazing impact.
- Risks associated with moving cattle.

**IAMP Preferences/Considerations**: The IAMP project incentivizes practices that improve soil health and support productive grazing systems. The IAMP Implementing Partner representative will work with the enrolling Producer to develop a grazing plan to monitor key indicators for grazing management. The plan will foster collaboration and ensure compliance with established standards. It will guide grazing timing, intensity, and duration in order to:

1. Enhance soil health and vegetative cover through strategic grazing,
2. Adopt rotational grazing methods,
3. Monitor grazing based on various parameters like utilization,
4. Include scheduled rest from grazing based on environmental factors,
5. Properly locate livestock facilities and ensure access to “sacrifice” areas to protect resources and optimize animal distribution,
6. Implement biosecurity measures,
7. Integrate prescribed grazing with other pest and weed control methods,
8. Consider transitioning to alternative, sustainable land uses like forage crops,
9. Use drought prediction tools for forage production accuracy.

When grazing occurs on cropland on which IAMP practices are implemented, that cropland may be managed by the rancher or by another IAMP participant. The IAMP contract will be made directly with entity controlling the grazed cropland. Farmers and ranchers can work together to apply for IAMP incentives, or IAMP can facilitate making connections between farmers and ranchers wishing to pursue this option.

**Specific Details**: A narrative prescribed grazing plan will be created that includes:

- Goals and Objectives clearly stated.
- Resource Inventory i.e. resource condition/concern.
- Ecological site(s), existing structures, facilities, soil.
- Animal numbers by type and class.
- Forage: Inventory of the expected forage quality, quantity, and species of forage in each management unit(s) during the grazing period.
- Forage-Animal balance developed as a sustainable grazing plan for the management units, which ensure forage produced or available meets forage demand of livestock and/or wildlife of concern.
- Identified periods of grazing, rest, and other treatment activities for each management unit.
- Contingency plan that details potential problems (i.e. severe drought, flooding) and serves as a guide for adjusting the grazing prescription to ensure resource management and economic feasibility without resource degradation.

**Verification Required Prior to Payment**:

- Monitoring plan developed with appropriate records to assess whether the grazing strategy is meeting objectives.
- Photo monitoring and/or stubble height/ biomass remaining on field, with the actual value being determined by the land management goals/ objectives.
- Plan must be designed to avoid overgrazing (see grazing plan).
- Inspection by an implementing partner representative to ensure adherence to the grazing plan and standards agreed to in the contract as determined by the land management goals.
- A Grazing Plan, documentation of grazing implementation, stubble height, photographic records.
- Monitoring data and grazing records will be used on a regular basis within the prescribed grazing plan to ensure that objectives are met. All facilitating practices (i.e., fencing, watering facilities, etc.) that are needed to effect adequate grazing distribution as planned will be maintained in good working order.

**Incentive Payments**: $1 per head day on enrolled acreage. Priority will be given to acreage that increases the feed value, advantaging cropland with cover crops and interseeded crops but with the understanding that enrollment of alfalfa and other grazing crops will be necessary to adequately include beef as a commodity. The grazing of perennial crops will be limited to acreage caps and subject to approval by the IAMP advisory team.

**Stacking or Companion Practices**: The grazing incentive will ideally be linked to cropland incentive for the grazed ground. The grazed ground can be managed with several other IAMP practices: Biochar, Cover crops, Conservation crop rotation (>2 crops), Intercropping, No tillage from conventional, Reduced tillage from conventional, Nutrient management), Prescribed grazing, Soil carbon amendment. Typically, these will be incentivized following standard payments.

**Sources**:

NRCS Prescribed Grazing (528)

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