

What is Southwest Project Grass?

A cooperative effort by local Farmers, County Conservation Districts, and other Industry Partners with assistance from various United States Department of Agriculture Agencies to improve pasture and rotational grazing systems in Southwest PA

SWPG Hosted Events:

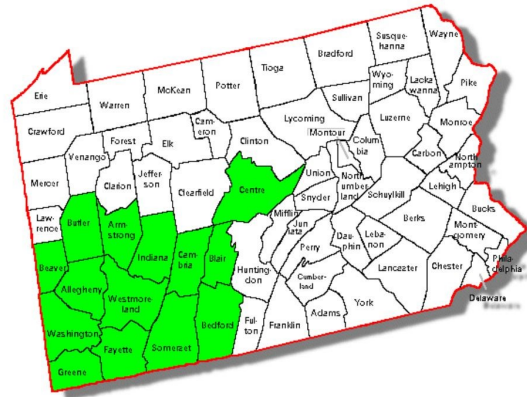
- Field Days
- Pasture Walks
- Grazing Bus Tours
- Grassland Evaluation Contest
- Grazing Conference

Email us for details:
email@swprojectgrass.com

SWPG Objectives

- ✓ Improve economic position of farmers, particularly those working on smaller operations
- ✓ Enhance Pennsylvania through better utilization of grasslands
- ✓ Increase the amount of livestock production in the Commonwealth to increase efficiency and develop improved marketing capabilities for hay and livestock
- ✓ Achieve better utilization of land and water resources for improved environmental quality

14 Participating County Conservation Districts



Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Bedford, Blair, Butler, Cambria, Centre, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, and Westmoreland.

Cooperating Agencies

Penn's Corner Conservancy Charitable Trust Inc.
 Natural Resources Conservation Service of PA
 USDA-Agriculture Research Service of PA
 PA State Conservation Commission
 PA Department of Agriculture
 PA Department of Environmental Protection
 Headwaters PA
 Ag Progress Days, PSU

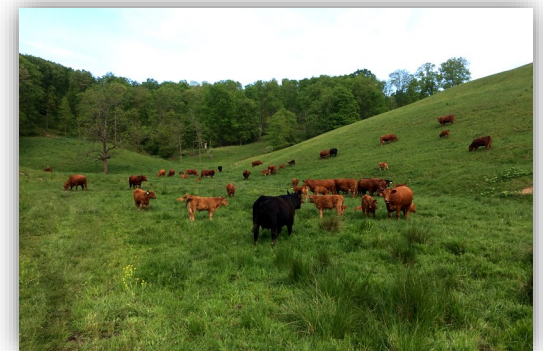


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Save – Time. Money. Soil.

Improve – Profits. Forage Production. Animal Health. Soil Health.



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Economics of Grazing

Direct Savings:

- Fuel
- Commercial Fertilizer
- Feed
- Labor

Indirect Savings:

- Lower veterinarian bills
- Less equipment wear and tear
- Improved forage yield and quantity
- Improved productivity allows for more grazing days per year
- Reduce amount of feed needing stored throughout winter
- Reduce total amount of manure needing stored

Having less manure to handle and less feed to store the average farm can see average fuel savings of 143 gallons per year

Savings per year (on average)

\$64 per beef animal
\$23 per sheep animal
\$65 per dairy animal



Rotational grazing is a menu, choose what's best for YOU!

Environmental Benefits

- By taking highly erodible cropland out of production and converting it to a grass based rotational grazing system, farmers have saved on average 1.4 tons of soil per acre per year
- Rotational grazing is a best management practice for nutrient management and is a low input method of farming
- Installing stream bank fencing as part of a plan helps:
 1. prevent accelerated erosion from livestock
 2. improve drinking water quality for livestock
 3. increases aquatic species and wildlife on the farm

Suggested Stocking Rates

Stocking rate: Number of animals one acre of pasture can support

Numbers depend on: soil type, forage type, climate, type of animal and the management of the grazer

General Guide:

Beef: 1 cow and calf per 1.4 acres

Dairy: 1 cow per 1.7 acres

Horse: 1 horse per 1.2 acres

Sheep: 4 to 6 ewes per 1 acre



Management is the KEY!

Tips for getting started

- ✓ Talk to people who are involved in grazing
- ✓ Develop a grazing plan
- ✓ A good fence is essential
- ✓ A water source is important
- ✓ Manage existing pastures to see how much they can produce
- ✓ Plan alleyways for animal movement and maintenance
- ✓ For livestock, place all gates in the corner of the paddock
- ✓ Multi-species forage pasture is better than a single species
- ✓ Plan for winter feeding program
- ✓ Size paddocks for 1-7 days of grazing—shorter occupation times increase pasture yield and recovery
- ✓ Plan to have more acres to graze in the late summer and fall than you will need in the spring

“Double your pasture yield, plant a fence post.”

**J.B. Harrold,
NRCS Grazing Specialist**