

**GRAZING
PASTURE
MANAGEMENT**

**PASTURE SYSTEMS
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PENN STATE**

Developing a pasture system that utilizes your land resources and fits in with your total animal, forage, and crop program is an important first step in pasture management.

A major goal in pasture management is to provide quality pasture for the grazing animals throughout the grazing season. By utilizing the various growth patterns of the many pasture species

grown in Pennsylvania, the grazing season can potentially last from April to December.

Components Of A Pasture System

Permanent cool-season pasture. Land that is not suitable for crop production because of poor soil characteristics or topography. These sites are often overgrazed and under fertilized. With proper management, these pastures can provide significant amounts of forage to many dairy and livestock farms. Kentucky bluegrass, the

species most tolerant to close grazing, is the cool-season grass commonly found in permanent pasture. In addition, more productive forage species such as tall fescue or reed canarygrass can be grown on permanent pasture sites, often with a legume. Other grasses may also be found in permanent pastures but they do not persist as well.

Semi-permanent cool-season pasture. When properly managed, most perennial cool-season legumes and grasses grown for hay and silage can also be used for pasture. Often these pastures are incorporated in the crop rotation and when grown on good soils and properly managed, can be very productive.

Warm-season pasture. Warm-season perennial grasses, including switchgrass, big bluestem and Indiangrass, grow well from mid-June through September, can provide adequate pasture when cool-season pastures are often inadequate, and are especially suited for beef cattle.

Annual pastures. Grown in rotation with other crops, annual pastures containing brassicas, small grains, or summer-annual grasses can provide supplemental spring, summer, or fall grazing.

Table 1. Animal units of various species and classes of livestock.

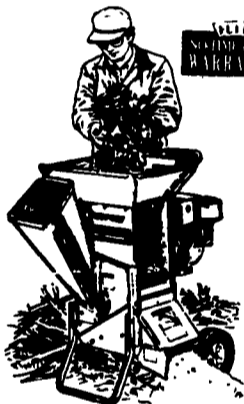
Livestock	Animal units
Beef cattle	
1000-lb dry cow	1.0
1300-lb dry cow	1.3
1000-lb lactating cow (1st 4 months after calving)	1.4
1300-lb lactating cow (1st 4 months after calving)	1.6
2000-lb mature bull	1.7
550-lb growing-finishing heifer (1.0 lb/d gain)	1.0
550-lb growing-finishing steer (2.0 lb/d gain)	1.23
Sheep	
110-lb brood ewe	.15
132-lb brood ewe	.17
154-lb brood ewe	.18
175-lb brood ewe	.20
300-lb mature ram	.40
110- to 132-lb replacement ewe, lambs, and yearlings	.22
220-lb replacement ram, lambs, and yearlings	.42
Dairy*	
1000-lb dairy cow (maintenance)	1.0
800-lb dairy cow (last 2 months of gestation)	1.0
1000-lb dairy cow (last 2 months of gestation)	1.2
1300-lb dairy cow (last 2 months of gestation)	1.5
1500-lb mature dairy bull	1.4
2000-lb mature dairy bull	1.9
550-lb growing dairy heifer	1.0

*Animal units for lactating cows are difficult to determine because of supplemental feeding.

(Turn to Page E37)



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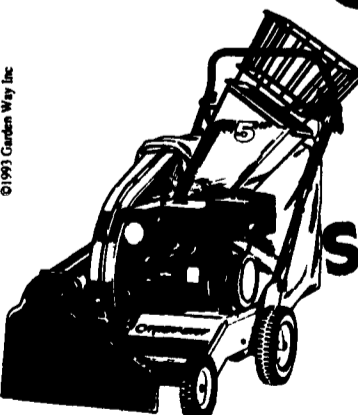
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