

# Benefits of Rotational Grazing

Matt Blose, Marissa Friel, Courtney Hale, Maureen Hirzel

## Introduction

- Among pasture based operations, there has been an increased interest in rotational grazing.
- Rotational grazing involves moving livestock to fresh paddocks of forage to allow for previously grazed paddocks to regrow before the next grazing event.<sup>4</sup>
- Benefits of rotational grazing include: optimal use of forages and pasture, decrease in feed costs, and improved health and performance of grazing flocks.<sup>5</sup>

## How to Start

- Consider how much land can be used for pastures. Pastures must be large enough to support your grazing flock.
- Aerial images of your land may be beneficial when setting up a rotational grazing scheme.<sup>1</sup>
- Make sure you have enough resources to set up adequate fencing, watering systems, and grazing area.<sup>1</sup>
- Monitor forage growth and consumption within each paddock to maximize land efficiency.

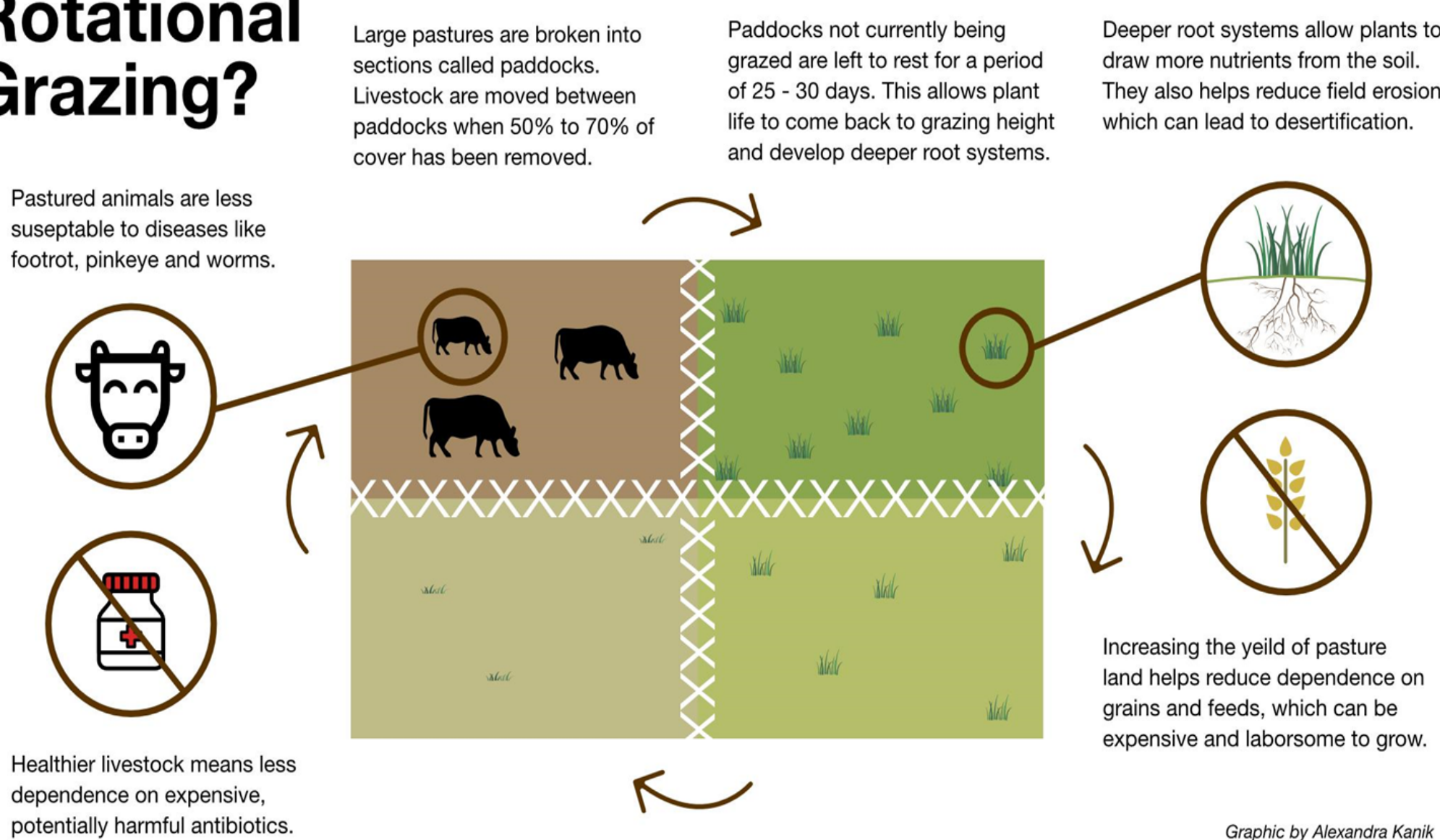


Making sure you have enough land and fencing is crucial to starting a rotational grazing system on your farm.

## Benefits

- Decreases labor and feed cost.<sup>1</sup>
- Reduces soil erosion when compared to row cropping.<sup>1</sup>
- Allows time for palatable forages to regrow. When not rotating pastures, heavily consumed forages are consumed first and aren't able to regrow due to continuous grazing pressure.<sup>2</sup>
- Palatable forages are often weakened in continuous grazing systems, while less desirable forages thrive. This will result in poor grazing efficiency and land utilization.<sup>5</sup>
- Decreases the magnitude of parasite load, resulting in an overall healthier flock.<sup>3</sup>
- Large pastures previously under-utilized by flock will be consumed when sub-divided into smaller paddocks, leading to an increase in land and animal production.<sup>5</sup>
- Increases per-animal gain.<sup>2</sup>
- Less time spent harvesting forages (pasture management).<sup>1</sup>

## What is Rotational Grazing?



The use of portable electric fencing makes rotational grazing easy.

## Considerations

- Rotational grazing requires organized management and planning.
- In order to assist in the control of internal parasites, it is critical to understand the life cycle of the parasite of interest.<sup>5</sup>
- Season changes bring different challenges:
- When do specific forages grow best?
- When to plant pastures and specific forage species?
- Less pasture will be available, so there will need to be supplementation (hay and or grain) during the winter months when pasture is unavailable.
- Be sure to conduct soil tests for the best forage establishment and success of pastures.<sup>6</sup>
- Understand the nutritional requirements for each stage of production in order to plan for future grazing events.<sup>6</sup>

## Conclusions

Rotational grazing is an organized method of livestock grazing. The desired outcomes resulting from this method are to decrease labor and feed costs as well as promote grazing flock health and performance. The benefits of rotational grazing are shown through increased productivity and improved utilization of the land.



You can utilize different forages and pastures in your system.

## References

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