Why Use Management-intense Grazing

What is MiG?

Management-intensive grazing is knowing the what, how, and why of pasture and livestock management to optimize your income or goals. Rotational grazing is part of MiG and provides the ability to control the livestock’s grazing activity, allowing us to manage the animal and the plant. The emphasis in MiG is in managing the animal to do the work and not working harder ourselves.

1. Increase Forage Yield
2. Establish and Maintain Legumes
3. Lengthen the Grazing Season
4. Control Weeds
5. Increase Summer Production and Manage Drought Damage

Increased Forage Yields

MiG often doubles the yield from a pasture. This is due to increased legumes in the pasture, improved nutrient recycling, improved plant vigor providing more growth, and improved grazing efficiency harvesting more of the forage. MiG can also reduce soil erosion retaining desired top soil and soil organic matter to increase water holding capacity of soil and plant nutrients.

Establish and Maintain Legumes

Rotational grazing used in MiG enables us to establish legumes and prevent livestock from overgrazing legumes so that they live longer and are more productive. Legumes fix nitrogen from the air and reduce the need for purchased fertilizer. Legumes do need adequate levels of soil or fertilizer phosphorus, potassium, and pH.

Lengthen the Grazing Season

MiG enables us to lengthen the grazing season since more forage is produced and we can control when and where the livestock are grazing during the year.

Control Weeds

MiG results in improved weed control since the pasture sod is denser and more vigorous, reducing weed seedling establishment. Also many weeds are eaten by livestock when grazed rotationally, and they provide high-quality forage.

Increase Summer Production and Manage Drought Damage

MiG produces healthier plants with longer roots that draw moisture from deeper in the soil during dry weather. During droughts livestock can be confined to an abuse-area and fed, protecting the rest of the pasture so that when wet weather returns the grass can take off growing again.
Buffers are an Important Component to MiG

Buffers such as aftermath grazing of hay fields allow for the evening out of available pasture during the growing season, fall, and early winter. Buffers should be planned. If not, nature and the animals will determine what will be the buffer.

Rotational grazing does not have to be on all of the farm.

Start by using MiG on the best forage stand, on the best soils. These sites will give the greatest response to improved management. As time and interests allow and needs require, intensify management on more of the farm.

MiG can be a low-cost management tool for increasing the efficiency of forage and grazing livestock production. More information can be found in the related TRIM fact sheets numbered 5004, 5184, 5710, 5712, 5714, 5716, 5718.