

Calculating Allowable Grazing Hours Per Day

Assumptions:

- a) **does NOT apply to continuous grazing systems**
- b) **a cow/calf pair eats 790 lbs of forage per year**
- c) **the average horse size is 1,100 lbs**

1. _____ (A) tons per acre X 2,000 lbs/ton = _____ (B) lbs/acre of pasture
2. _____ (B) lbs/acre X _____ # of acres = _____ (C) lbs of forage per year
3. _____ (C) X 0.7 usable coefficient = _____ (D) lbs available forage per year

4. 790 lbs X 1.5 horse coefficient = 1,185 lbs/month/horse needed (E *depends on horse size)
5. 1,185 lbs/month/horse X _____ # of horses = _____ (F) lbs/month needed

6. _____ (D) lbs available forage per year divided by _____ (F) lbs/month needed
= _____ (G) "horse months" of grazing
7. _____ (G) "horse months" of grazing x 30.4 days per month X 24 hours per day
= _____ (H) hours of grazing per year

- 8a. _____ (H) divided by _____ (I) # of hours grazing per day = _____ (J) number of days you can graze that many hours

...now try a lower number of hours grazing per day...

- 8b. _____ (H) divided by _____ (I) # of hours grazing per day = _____ (J) number of days you can graze that many hours

...try it one more time with a different number of grazing hours per day...

- 8c. _____ (H) divided by _____ (I) # of hours grazing per day = _____ (J) number of days you can graze that many hours

Based on these calculations, which number of grazing hours per day best matches your schedule, horse's body condition score, and property goals? Check the Western Montana Pasture Calendar for suggested grazing months.

*Sourced from MSU Extension Resources