





Western Montana Pasture Calendar

Local guidelines for grazing horses and livestock

Instructions: The pasture calendar is for horse and livestock stewards that wish to create long-living, productive grass pastures. By default, we are also land stewards, and have a responsibility to our neighbors, our community, and our watershed to be constantly striving for better plant, soil, water and animal health. This document is meant to be referenced throughout the year to better understand plant activity above and below ground and, thereby, make smart decisions about our pasture management. For every farm, there is a different way to manage the interaction between our animals and the land, but together we can make a more beautiful landscape for everyone to enjoy.

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Western Montana Pasture Calendar

Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
<p style="text-align: center;">March</p> <p>Triggered by soil temperatures, desirable grazing plants (especially cool-season grasses) use winter energy reserves to initiate new growth.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove horses and livestock from pastures into sacrifice areas. When dry, drag/harrow fields to spread out the nutrients in the manure. Apply composted manure onto pastures especially in areas where animals did not defecate or urinate. 	<p style="text-align: center;">June</p> <p>The growth rate of grasses starts to slow as they put energy into making seeds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider your stocking density to facilitate more “even” grazing across paddocks/cells/strips and allow longer rest periods for regrowth of grasses. Consider mowing to encourage more even grazing and cut off weed seeds. Spot spray or pull weeds before they bloom. 	<p style="text-align: center;">September</p> <p>Desirable cool-season, perennial grasses are in summer dormancy until late September when root regrowth is initiated by cooling soils and moisture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is a good time to submit a fecal egg count to determine parasite load and plan for fall deworming. Consider supplementing with some hay to relieve pressure on heat stressed grasses. Good time to lime acidic soils, fertilize with P and K, and sample soils. 	<p style="text-align: center;">December</p> <p>All plant growth above and below ground has stopped.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overgrazing can delay spring regrowth by several weeks. Do not allow pasture access until the ground is frozen and snow is deep enough to protect dormant grasses. Encourage animals to drop manure evenly across the pasture by moving where you provide hay.
<p style="text-align: center;"> April</p> <p>This is a critical time for desirable cool-season grasses to produce the leaves and roots that will feed them throughout the year. Refrain from grazing!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> April or early May are great times to submit a soil sample which will indicate the appropriate amount of fertilizer. Mow or graze cheatgrass stands before they go to seed. 	<p style="text-align: center;">July</p> <p>Growth rate of cool-season grass slows considerably. Seed heads mature and stalks become lignified and unpalatable.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mow tall stands to facilitate more even grazing especially for horses. Do not graze cells/paddocks again until grass has regrown to >6” tall. Plan for longer rest periods between grazing events as days get hotter. Irrigation is necessary to keep grasses growing. 	<p style="text-align: center;"> October</p> <p>Desirable cool-season grasses are busy below ground growing new roots in preparation for winter dormancy. This is a very critical period for promoting grass stand longevity!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a higher risk of fall laminitis/founder as diurnal fluctuations in temperature stress grass regrowth. Remove horses and livestock from pastures into sacrifice areas. 	<p style="text-align: center;">January</p> <p>Cool-season grasses are in winter dormancy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protect grasses from being grazed <3” plant stubble. Encourage animals to drop manure evenly across the pasture by moving where you provide the hay. Stockpiled pastures and crop residues can be grazed.
<p style="text-align: center;">May</p> <p>This is a period of rapid growth for all grasses. Variations in precipitation from year to year will change rate of growth. Overgrazing from the previous year will delay spring regrowth by several weeks.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once grasses are >6 inches tall, you can start your rotational grazing system for horses and livestock. Monitor for weeds and spot spray or pull where found. 	<p style="text-align: center;">August</p> <p>The cool-season grass plants start initiating summer dormancy (aka summer slump). They do not grow during this period, making over-grazing all too easy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider supplementing some hay to relief pressure from the heat stressed cool-season grasses. 	<p style="text-align: center;">November</p> <p>Desirable cool-season, perennial grasses begin winter dormancy period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drag/harrow again and spread composted manure. Stockpiled grasses (those that haven’t been grazed all year) can provide enough nutrition for most animal life stages! Be careful to avoid erosion and soil compaction during high precipitation. 	<p style="text-align: center;">February</p> <p>Cool-season grass plants are in winter dormancy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage animals to drop manure evenly across the pasture by moving where you provide the hay. Stockpiled pastures and crop residues can be grazed. Overgrazing can delay spring regrowth by several weeks.