

# Pasture Management Schedule Throughout the Year

## March

- If you haven't already done so, sample soils to assess your pasture's spring nutrient needs. We would be happy to assist you through our first one's free soil sampling program.
- Prepare for spring grazing if the soil is no longer saturated and grass height is at least 6".
- Restrict livestock access to surface water, wells, and septic drain fields.
- Cut or mow weeds when buds appear.

## April

- Apply fertilizer or spread composted manure if soil isn't saturated. Apply 40% of total amount recommended by soil tests.
- Reseed or over-seed pastures.
- Reseed confinement areas.
- Pull weeds now while they are small.

## May

- Rotate pastures when grass height is down to three inches, and don't allow them back on until grass is 6". Mow pastures after grazing to ensure the height of all plants is 3" and to prevent weeds from going to seed.
- Drag pastures to evenly distribute manure.
- Apply 45% of annual fertilizer required by soil tests.

## June

- Avoid under-grazing. Do not allow grass to "get ahead of livestock". Mow pastures to prevent them from going to seed and losing nutritional value. Another option is to set aside some of the pasture for hay production.
- Continue weed pulling and mowing.

## July

- Continue to rotate, drag, and clip pastures.
- Check for erosion where livestock congregate. Move feed, water, and mineral blocks away from gates and shade to more evenly distribute grazing.
- Plan for winter confinement area and footings.
- Weed control is imperative this month to keep them from going to seed.

## August

- Avoid overgrazing this month when pasture production slows down.
- Check for erosion: Do not feed animals hay or grain on the ground especially this month when soil is dry. They will create bare spots where weeds will invade. Also, horses can get sand colic from ingesting dirt in their feed.
- Plan for reseeding. Order seed, lime, and fertilizer and reserve equipment now to avoid the rush next month.
- Prepare winter manure storage bins.

## September

- Apply remaining 15% of annual pasture fertilizer needs if fall rains come before the first frost.
- Drag pastures to distribute manure before winter rains.
- Restrict livestock from pastures if the soil becomes saturated.
- Reseed in mid to latter part of the month.
- Check for trees with falling leaves that may be toxic. Common trees poisonous to livestock are yew, black locust, cherry, horse chestnut, red maple, and oak.
- Cut blackberries now to prevent nutrient storage in the roots.

## October-February

- Restrict livestock from pastures when soil is saturated. Prevent nutrient runoff from manure into groundwater with at least a 10' buffer of vegetation. Gather outside manure at least twice a week to prevent nutrient runoff. Store covered at least 100' from any well or surface water to prevent water contamination.
- Install or check gutters and downspouts on buildings adjacent to livestock holding facilities. □

