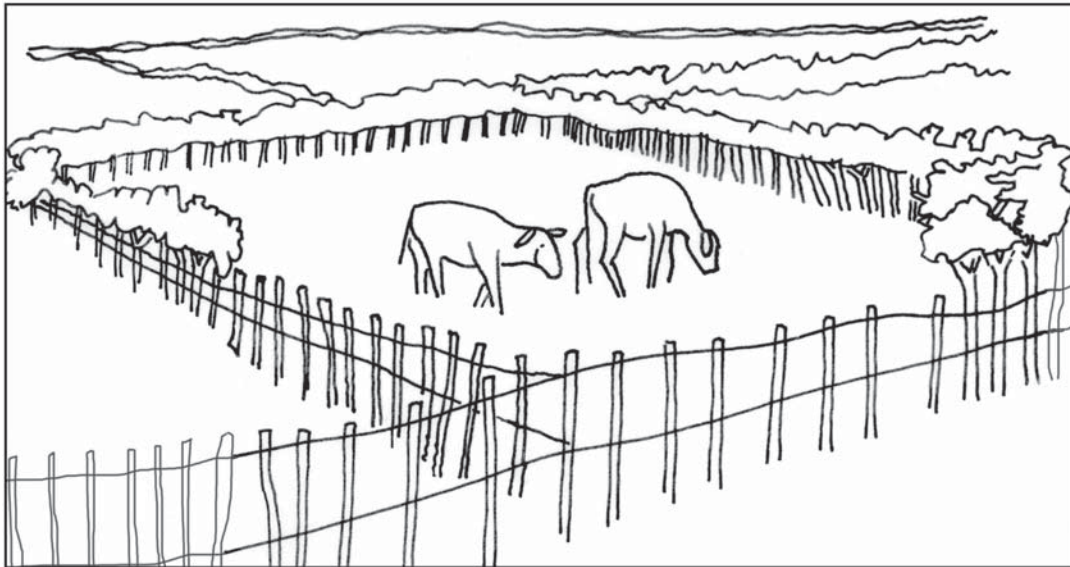

Prescribed Grazing for Pacific Island Farms

USDA NRCS Practice (528)



Use prescribed grazing to lower feed costs, control weeds, simplify manure management, and reduce pests and diseases that can harm your farm animals.

What is prescribed grazing?

Prescribed grazing (or rotational grazing) is a way for Pacific Island farmers to make the best use of their available pasture land to feed their grazing animals (cattle, sheep, goats, carabao). It is done by dividing the farm into paddocks with fencing, and then moving the animals through them for a short period of time.

Why do prescribed grazing?

Pacific Island farmers can benefit from using prescribed grazing on their farm. Using this practice can:

- lower purchased feed costs.
- improve the health of your animals.
- lower weed control costs.
- simplify manure management.
- prevent soil erosion and keep manure and urine out of waterways.
- reduce animal pests and diseases.

Where is prescribed grazing used?

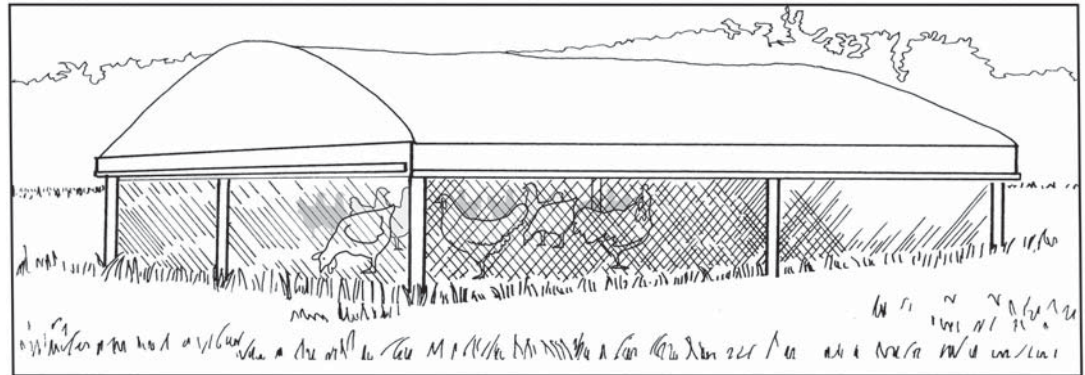
- On many farms with many types of livestock
-

Plan for prescribed grazing

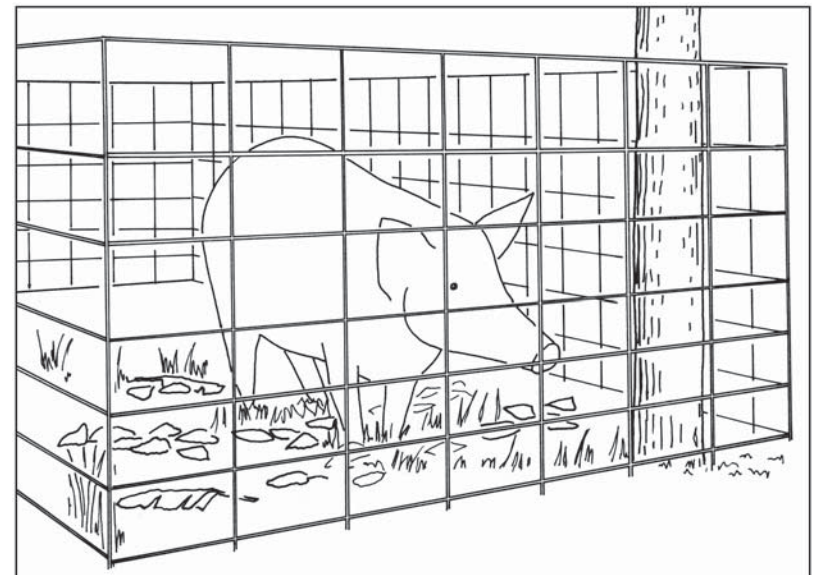
You may be able to increase the number of animals you raise, feed your animals better and at a lower cost, and keep them healthier by using a prescribed grazing system. Moving animals across the farm avoids build up of manure and urine, and makes manure management easier. By keeping animals away from streams and wells, you can prevent water contamination. Prescribed grazing takes some planning, some experience, and some initial investments in fencing.

Fencing

Temporary, portable electric fencing is useful for prescribed grazing systems. Divide the farm into paddocks with fencing, and then move livestock through them to graze for a short period of time (1-14 days). Use fencing to control animal traffic. Areas near water and mineral sources, under shade trees, and along trails and walkways tend to get damaged by animal traffic. By changing fencing location and moving water and mineral sources, animal traffic patterns can be managed.



Example of a portable pen system for chickens



Example of a portable pen system for pigs



A flexible watering system can help you move your animals around the pasture and avoid damage to the area around their water source.

How to select the pasture areas on your farm

- Be sure the plants you are growing are a good match for your animal's nutritional needs. Check for toxic weeds.
- Graze an area until about half of the plant material has been eaten. Then allow the plants 18 to 25 days to re-grow.
- To reduce feed costs and improve the health of your animals, you may want to improve the quality of the forage by growing more nutritious plants such as improved forage grasses and legumes. You can often improve pasture areas with fertilizer and lime, weed control, reseeding and other types of pasture management.

Managing your animals

- Use permanent or portable fencing to keep your animals where you want them. Fencing can help with predator control too.
- Don't put too many animals on the land. They can permanently damage your fields. During drought times, when there is less forage growth, decrease the number

of grazing animals to avoid damaging your ground cover plants. Keep more than 80% of the ground covered by plants at all times.

- Provide water for your animals. Use a permanent water system or portable watering device. The zone around the water source tends to build up manure and urine and becomes a source of parasites and disease. A flexible watering system can help you move your animals around the pasture and avoid damage to the area around their water source.
- Provide shelter and shade for your animals. Trees can provide shelter in many areas, or use portable shelters.

The USDA NRCS or your local Cooperative Extension Service can help you design an annual grazing plan that will include:

- size and location of paddocks.
- number of days of grazing and days of rest.
- number of animals that can be supported on the forage found on your farm.
- farm map with fencing, water supplies, and forage resources.

For the best results, combine **prescribed grazing** with other conservation practices:

- **Fence (382):** a constructed barrier to animals or people
- **Water Sources:** watering facility (614), pond (378), spring development (574), water harvesting catchment (636), water well (642)
- **Animal Trails and Walkways (575):** a constructed way to move livestock through difficult or environmentally sensitive areas
- **Heavy Use Area Protection (561):** strengthening on-farm areas with frequent intense use
- **Manure Control:** manure transfer (634), composting facility (317); waste storage facility (313), waste treatment lagoon (359), waste utilization (633)
- **Pasture Improvement:** pasture and hay planting (512), range planting (550)

Additional information is available from your local USDA Service Center or at www.pb.nrcs.usda.gov and www.hi.nrcs.usda.gov.



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