



AEM Tier 2 Worksheet

Pasture Management

Glossary

Attractant: Supplemental feed, salt, mineral, water source, shade or other item that entices livestock to congregate in a single location.

At-Grade Crossing: A stabilized area that allows livestock to ford a stream in a controlled manner. The structure controls bank and streambed erosion. This practice is subject to the specifications of NRCS Standard 578, Stream Crossing.

Flow Path: Any non-vegetated channel that runs part of the year and is partially fed by base flow (or shallow groundwater) in addition to surface runoff.

Heavy Use Area (also called barnyards, holding areas, sacrifice areas, confinement areas, calf hutch areas, feedlots and winter paddocks): Areas where animals are concentrated that are paved, un-vegetated or result in overgrazed or denuded soil conditions.

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Background

New York State is located in the center of what is historically considered the hay and pasture region of the United States. Characteristics of the region's climate, soil and topography are extremely favorable for the production and utilization of cool-season grasses and legumes for livestock production.

A relatively new practice, silvopasture, combines trees with forage and livestock production. The trees are managed for high-value sawlogs and, at the same time, provide shade and shelter for livestock and forage, reducing stress and sometimes increasing forage production.

Well-managed pasture is an excellent land use, capable of producing a high-quality feed for very cost-effective livestock production. Well-managed pasture can also protect water quality by reducing erosion and runoff and enhancing wildlife habitat. However, overgrazing and unrestricted livestock access to surface water resources leads to environmental concerns. Effective pasture planning and management practices that promote the production of high quality feed and its efficient utilization by livestock will reduce water quality degradation.

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AEM Principle:

Pastures should be managed to ensure optimum forage production, not only for the economic well-being of the agricultural operation, but for soil health, the prevention of soil erosion and water quality through controlled access and reduced runoff.

Glossary Continued...

Laneways: A walkway for livestock providing stable passage between farmstead facilities and the pasture system. This practice is subject to NRCS Conservation Practice Standard 575, Animal Trails & Walkways.

Prescribed Grazing Management: The controlled harvest of vegetation by grazing or browsing animals managed with the intent to achieve a specific objective. Often the objective is to maximize livestock production on a per-animal basis or on a per-unit of forage basis.

Silvopasture: The intentional combination of trees, forages and livestock managed as a single integrated practice for the collective benefit of each.

Waterbody: A lake, reservoir, pond, river, continuously-flowing stream, continuously-flowing spring, wetland, estuary or bay.

Background Continued...

Prescribed grazing management is a systematic, site-specific combination of planned practices that can:

- Promote an alternative to the sole use of machinery to manage the quality, quantity and composition of vegetation in a pasture to conserve fossil fuels, reduce air emissions and equipment wear and tear.
- Reduce soil erosion potential by converting annually tilled cropland to year-round vegetative-covered pasture.
- Protect water quality by managing livestock access to streams and other waterbodies.
- Maintain dense vegetative cover providing quality forage, erosion protection, nutrient uptake, improved soil health and reduced runoff.
- Produce quality forage resulting in reduced purchased feed nutrients and improved profitability.

AEM Tier 2 Worksheet: Pasture Management		Potential Concern		
Factors Needing Assessment:	Lower 1	2	3	Higher 4
How long do livestock have access to a single pasture area?	One day or less and then moved to a new area.			Livestock is never moved during the growing season.
What is the average grazing animal per pasture acre ratio for the farm?				
What is the condition of pasture?	All areas are densely vegetated.	Densely vegetated, except in minor areas of heavier animal traffic.	Pasture is over-grazed and includes some bare and weedy areas.	Pasture has large areas with little vegetation and/or shows evidence of runoff and erosion.
If laneways are present, what is their condition?	Laneways are either fully vegetated or well-developed with stone, gravel, etc. There are no visible gullies.		Laneways are not planned, bare of vegetation and have evidence of runoff, erosion or ponding.	Lanes go up and down slopes, have visible gullies or ponding. Water flows along them to watercourses.
Are livestock allowed to congregate in the laneway? If yes, for how long (hrs/day)?				
Where are attractants positioned on the pasture?	Attractants are located greater than 100 ft. from waterbodies. AND Individual attractants are each located in a separate area.	Attractants are greater than 100 ft. from waterbodies. AND Attractants are located together.	Attractants are located greater than 35ft. from waterbodies. AND Individual attractants are each located in a separate area.	Attractants are located less than 35ft. from waterbodies.
What is the source(s) of water for the pasture?				

AEM Tier 2 Worksheet: Pasture Management		Potential Concern		
Factors Needing Assessment:	Lower 1	2	3	Higher 4
How are livestock managed around water courses?	The stream is fenced with a 35 ft. buffer. <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> If livestock need to cross the stream, they do so over a constructed laneway complete with a culvert and gates at both ends (limited access). <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> Livestock do not cross streams.	The stream is fenced, with limited access for watering. <p style="text-align: center;">AND</p> If livestock need to cross the stream, they do so over at-grade crossing with gates at both ends.		Livestock are not fenced out of the stream. The stream is crossed in many places and is used as a primary water source for livestock.
How are livestock managed around ponds and other persistently wet pasture areas?	Livestock are fenced out of all ponds and persistently wet pasture areas, <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> These areas do not exist.	Temporary fence is used to exclude livestock from these areas during wet times. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> Only limited access is permitted using a planned, stabilized location.		Livestock has unlimited access at all times.
How are seasonal watercourses in the pasture managed?	Flow paths are fully-vegetated and livestock are fenced out.	Livestock have full access during the grazing season. Flow paths are fully-vegetated. <p style="text-align: center;">OR</p> Temporary fence is used to limit livestock access during wet periods.	Livestock have full access to flow paths, which have limited vegetation, but the water flows into a vegetated area before entering a stream or other waterbody.	Livestock have full access to flow paths, which have little or no vegetation, and which outlet into streams or other waterbodies.

AEM Tier 2 Worksheet: Pasture Management		Potential Concern		
Factors Needing Assessment:	Lower 1	2	3	Higher 4
Do Heavy Use Areas exist in the pasture any time during the year?	(If yes, complete HUA Worksheet)			
Do livestock have access to woodlots?	more information can be found at: http://www2.dnr.cornell.edu/ext/info/pubs/MapleAgrofor/SilvopasturingInNY.pdf			
Benefits to other resources can also be possible while working toward improved water quality. Taking stock of how existing and future management affect soil, water, air, plants, animals, energy, greenhouse gases, people, and economics can result in more effective plans and additional benefits to farms and communities both now and into the future.				
Additional Comments:				