



Manitoba Association of
Watersheds

Rotational Grazing

Prairie Watersheds Climate Program (PWCP)

Rotational Grazing

What is it? What options do I have through the PWCP?

Rotational grazing is a practice for grazing management to create sustainable forage resources for cattle producers. This practice offers multiple benefits such as soil quality improvement including better drainage, soil organic carbon increase, and pasture recovery. In addition, rotational grazing effectively reduces GHG emissions (CO₂, N₂O and CH₄), improves plant biomass, and reduces soil compaction. Livestock producers implementing this Beneficial Management Practice (BMP) will provide many benefits to climate change mitigation and soil protection.

Rotational grazing is an agroecological practice based on rotating the areas where the livestock graze throughout the grazing season. This method allows for better grazing by utilizing forages when they have the most nutritional value without over or under grazing certain species or pasture areas. This system can extend the grazing season reducing the need for winter feed to be made and transported to a confinement feeding area. It also spreads manure throughout the pasture reducing the need for synthetic fertilizers on pastures.

With funding support from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), the PWCP may provide funding to farmers and ranchers for the adoption and on-farm implementation of rotational grazing activities that are recommended by a professional agronomist, agrologist or certified crop advisor. Eligible activities include:

- Fencing to support the rotational grazing plan
- Watering systems to support the rotational grazing plan
- Improving pasture compositions by seeding legumes such as alfalfa or sainfoin
- Creation of a grazing management plan



Cattle grazing on a rotational basis

Why should I implement rotational grazing?

Rotational grazing offers unique advantages to livestock producers. This practice involves rotating cattle through distinct areas of pasture (often called paddocks) at designated intervals for a short period of time. Multiple studies have found that rotational grazing increases the forage biomass and nutritional value of pastures when compared to conventional grazing systems.

In addition, rotational grazing provides important ecological services such as improving soil health, increasing carbon sequestration, and promoting biodiversity. Additionally, rates of nitrogen fixation and water infiltration increase when pasture composition is improved by seeding legumes (e.g. alfalfa and red clover).

The adoption of sustainable agricultural practices and BMPs such as rotational grazing can assist both farmers and the environment. In fact, hundreds of farmers throughout the prairies have decided to implement rotational grazing to improve their on-farm operations while also tackling the adverse effects of climate change on the agricultural sector.

How can I apply to PWCP?

PWCP is managed by the Manitoba Association of Watersheds (MAW). Delivery agents in Manitoba and Saskatchewan are available to assist farmers in the region with PWCP applications and documentation required for this program. In Manitoba, contact your local watershed district; in Saskatchewan, contact the Saskatchewan Association of Watersheds for further information about BMPs, funds, eligibility, and conditions. Full details are available at

www.manitobawatersheds.org/prairie-watershed-climate-program.



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