



The Art and Science of Grazing: How Grass Farmers Can Create Sustainable Systems for Healthy Animals and Farm Ecosystems

Sarah Flack

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Grazing management might seem simple: just put livestock in a pasture and let them eat their fill. However, as Sarah Flack explains in *The Art and Science of Grazing*, the pasture/livestock relationship is incredibly complex. If a farmer doesn't pay close attention to how the animals are grazing, the resulting poorly managed grazing system can be harmful to the health of the livestock, pasture plants, and soils. Well-managed pastures can instead create healthier animals, a diverse and resilient pasture ecosystem, and other benefits. Flack delves deeply below the surface of "let the cows eat grass," demonstrating that grazing management is a sophisticated science that requires mastery of plant and animal physiology, animal behavior, and ecology. She also shows readers that applying grazing management science on a working farm is an art form that calls on grass farmers to be careful observers, excellent planners and record-keepers, skillful interpreters of their observations, and creative troubleshooters.

The Art and Science of Grazing will allow farmers to gain a solid understanding of the key principles of grazing management so they can both design and manage successful grazing systems. The book's unique approach presents information first from the perspective of pasture plants, and then from the livestock perspective, helping farmers understand both plant and animal needs before setting up a grazing system.

This book is an essential guide for ruminant farmers who want to be able to create grazing systems that meet the needs of their livestock, pasture plants, soils, and the larger ecosystem. The book discusses all the practical details that are critical for sustained success: how to set up a new system or improve existing systems; acreage calculations; paddock layout; fence and drinking water access; lanes and other grazing infrastructure; managing livestock movement and flow; soil fertility; seeding and reseeding pastures; and more. The author includes descriptions of real grazing systems working well on dairy, beef, goat, and sheep farms in different regions of North America. The book covers pasture requirements specific to organic farming, but will be of use to both organic and non-organic farms.

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