Grazing systems, methods, & tricks.

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System vs. Method
Strategy vs. Tactic

- Grazing system: “A defined, integrated combination of animal, plant, soil and other environmental components and the grazing method(s) by which the system is managed to achieve specific results or goals” Ex:
  - Continuous Grazing System
  - Management Intensive Grazing (or “Rational Grazing”) System
  - Ultra-High Stock Density, Long Rest Period, Short Duration Grazing (or “Mob Grazing”) System

- Grazing methods- “...technique of grazing management designed to achieve a specific objective.” Ex:
  - Deferred grazing (“stockpiling”) to reduce fall hay feeding
  - Creep grazing to increase gain on calves still on the cow

Grazing Methods to Consider

- Continuous stocking
- Rotational stocking
- Deferred grazing “stockpiling”
- Creep grazing
- Strip grazing
- Limit grazing
- Leader-follower, first-last, or forward grazing

Continuous Stocking

Can work well with warm season perennials like bermudagrass or bahiagrass

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Rotational Stocking

Real benefits of rotational stocking

- Increased stocking rate (in many cases)
- Better persistence and productivity of pasture plants that are sensitive to close, continuous grazing
  - Alfalfa, red clover, tall fescue, orchardgrass, natives
- Improved utilization of more species in pasture
- Less waste of forage
- Better distribution of urine and feces
- Better control of livestock
- Increases establishment options (clovers, "crop rotations")
- Improves pasture management skills

Creep Grazing

Standard Creep Gate

Creep Grazing Pearl Millet on Tall Fescue-Based Pastures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Creep Grazed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calf gain, lbs</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calf ADG, lbs/d</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cow wt change, lbs</td>
<td>-60</td>
<td>+27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data from Thomas, Eason, Ball and Ruffin; AL Agric. Exp. Stn. Highlights Vol 30 No 2

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### Effects of creep grazing treatments on average daily gain of calves.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Creep Treatments</th>
<th>Calf ADG, lbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aeschynomene</td>
<td>1.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairy Indigo</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tifleaf 1 Pearl Millet</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alyceclover</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial creep</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Creep</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


### Creep grazing

- Excellent potential to improve calf gains
- Easy to implement into existing continuous grazing system
- Several forages have potential for creep grazing
  - Pearl millet, legumes, chicory, alfalfa, small grains and ryegrass

### Leader-Follower, First-Last, or Forward Grazing

- High requirement animals (leaders) get "tops" - leafy, high quality forage
  - Lact. dairy animals, replacement heifers, growing calves etc
- Last grazers get lowest quality - stems
  - Dry cows, mature animals
- Can have intermediate group(s).

**Leader-Follower Grazing**

**Sequence of Grazing Pastures**

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**Strip vs. Frontal Grazing**

- **Strip-Grazing**
  - Regrowth Expected

- **Frontal Grazing**
  - No Regrowth Expected
  - Stockpiled TF or Bermudagrass
  - Crop Residues

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**Fresian cows strip grazing timothy (overgrazed) in Germany**
(Photograph credit: Carl Hoveland)

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**Beef heifers frontal grazing Johnsongrass**
(Grazing School 2011, Double Bridges Farm)

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**Strip and Frontal Grazing**

- Best used where high utilization is needed, waste potential is high, controlled access is needed, or animals have lower nutrient requirements
- Stockpiled forages, crop residues (to minimize danger of founder on corn stalks), overly mature summer annuals, grazing corn

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**Limit or Timed Grazing**

- High-quality pasture grazed periodically; usually a few hours every day or two
- Low-quality pasture or hay feeding area

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**Limit or Timed Grazing**

(Photograph credit: John Andrae, Clemson Univ.)

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Limit or Timed Grazing
- Graze 2-3 h per day or on alternate day basis
  - Think of this as a supplement to lower quality pasture or hay
  - Allows cows to fill up
  - Consider implications of time of day on grazing behavior
    - Daybreak (2 x intake of any other period)
    - Sunset
    - About 3:00 p.m. for ~90 minutes.
- Useful where forage quality greatly exceeds animal requirements or where limited access is needed
  - Winter annuals (70+% TDN vs beef cow req. 58%).

Summary
- The “System” is more general and reflects your general grazing strategy (or philosophy)
- Methods are TACTICS
  - All are at your disposal
  - Mix and match as needed to optimize efficiency
- The greatest advantage of a managed, rational grazing system is that it is FLEXIBLE!