Patch Burn Grazing
What is it?

• Patch burn grazing is the use of prescribed fire and grazing livestock as a management strategy to increase the diversity and structure of the vegetation on a rangeland.
  • This creates a mosaic of heavily and lightly grazed areas within the same grazing unit.
How It Works

- Patch burn grazing is like other rotational grazing systems but with the addition of fire.
  - By burning an area of a pasture every year, this will attract the animals to graze in that area.
Management Recommendations

• Before burning, the current goals and stocking rate should be evaluated to determine if this system is the best option.
  • Stocking rate should allow for fuel load accumulation.
  • At least 2-5 inches of continuous plant material.
• Conduct prescribed burn on the area in late winter to early green-up of warm season grasses.
• Following the fire, the animals should be allowed immediate access to the burned areas.
Recommendations Cont.

- When it is time for the area to be grazed, it should be grazed normally.
  - More than 50% of the first year’s growth will be removed in year one.
- Proper stocking rate is necessary to obtain desired results.
  - The grazing unit should be stocked for the entire acreage, not just for the burned areas.
Example Rotation

- In the first year, area 1 of the pasture is burned and then grazed after.
- The second year, area 2 is burned and then grazed after.
- In the third year, area 3 is burned and then grazed after.
- Area 4 remains unburned after the three years.
Benefits

• Improves grazing distribution:
  • Increases grazing of less palatable grasses.
  • Desirable forage returns after burn more rapidly.

• Improves plant community:
  • Diversity of species and increases structure.
  • Timing of burn can help obtain the desired composition.

• Improves carrying capacity.

• Improves animal performance:
  • Average daily weight gains are comparable to other grazing strategies.
Advantages For The Producer

• Only one water source may be needed for the grazing unit.
• Less time will be spent rotating the animals and maintaining the grazing unit.
• Overall, this can lead to lower operating costs.
Resources

- Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
  - https://agrilifeextension.tamu.edu/
- The Prairie Project
  - https://www.theprairieproject.org/project-information/solutions/patch-burn-grazing