

Pasture and Weed Management

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Poor Pasture Management leads to...

- Soil compaction
- Muddy pastures in winter
- Undesirable weeds
- Unhealthy animals
- Pasture erosion



Grazing Management

- Types of Grazing

- Continuous
- Management Intensive
- Strip

- Other Factors

- Fencing
- Water
- Management skills/time

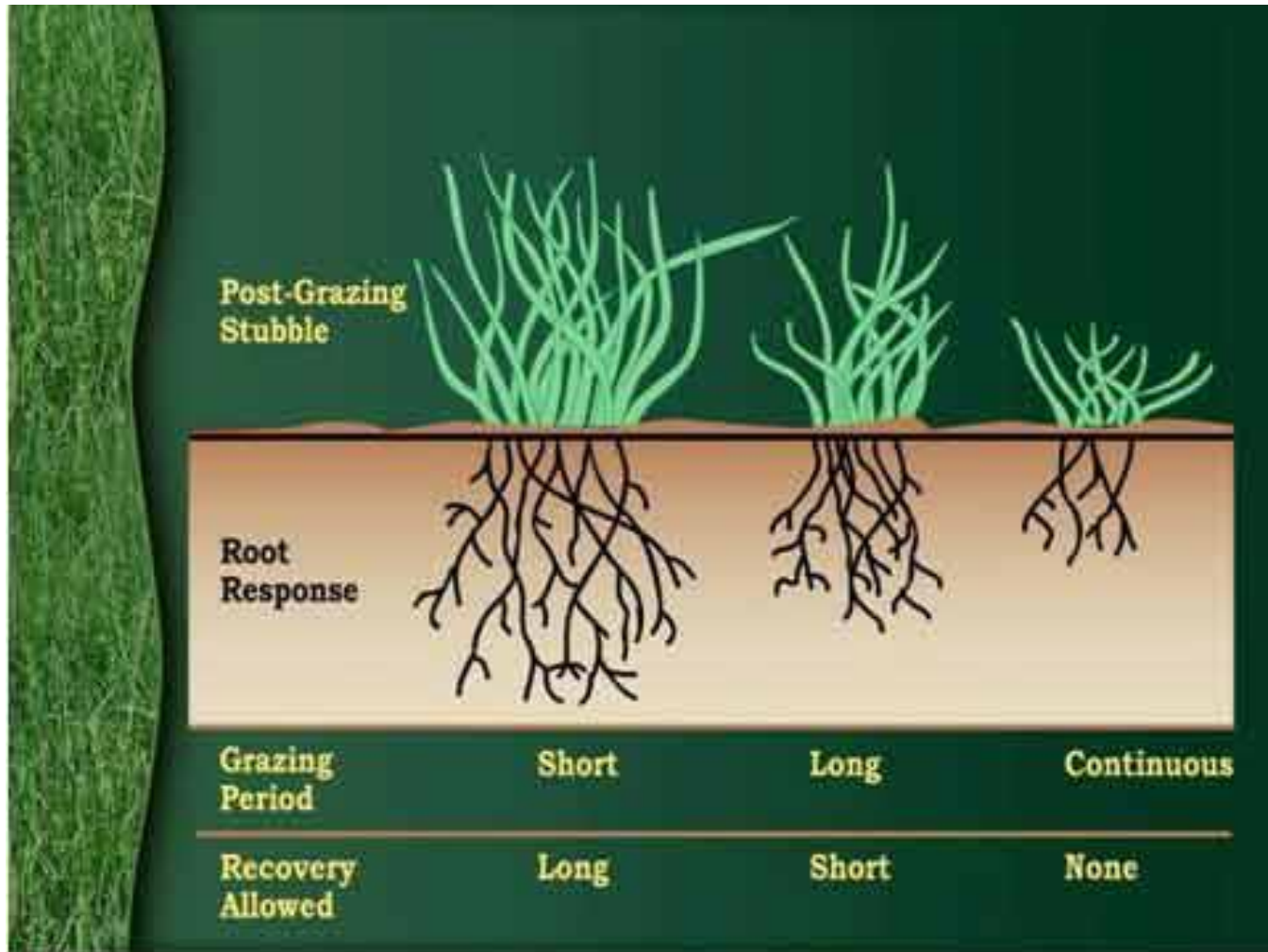
Continuous Grazing

- Maintain animals on a single pasture all year
- Requires very little labor
- Requires very few management skills

Downsides:

- Poor utilization of forages
- Discourages optimal plant performance

Continuous Grazing



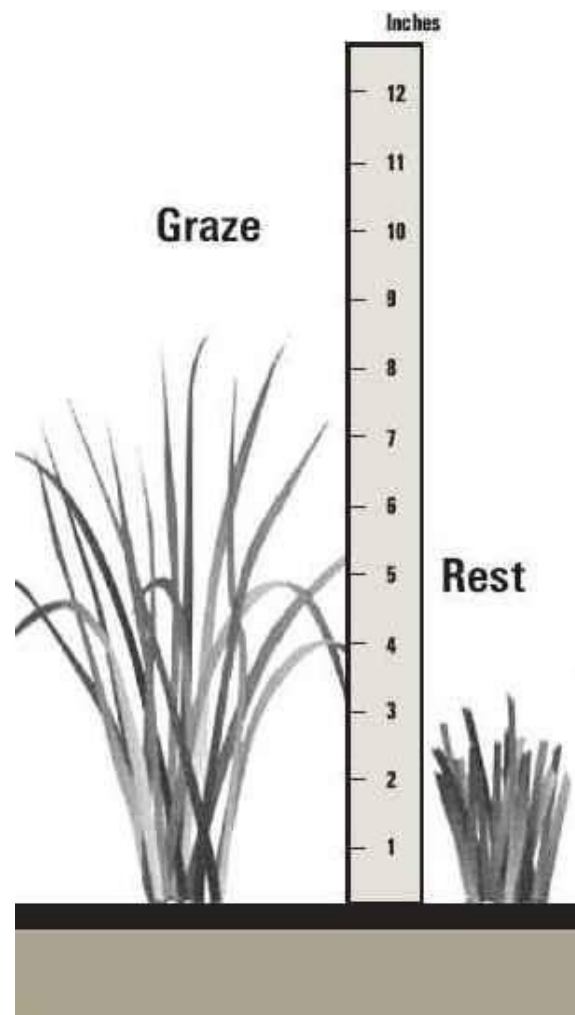
Grazing Behavior

- Select young immature plants & leaf blades
 - Damages growth reserves
 - Causes “roughs” and “lawns” in pasture
 - Allows weeds to flourish



Management Intensive Grazing

- What is it?
- Who should use it?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages?
- Biggest obstacles?
- Paddock size?



Management Intensive Grazing

- Often call MiG
- Also referred to as rotational grazing, controlled grazing etc.
 - The process of moving livestock from one pasture to another as the forage becomes available with grazed paddocks receiving a rest/regrowth period.



MiG

- Paddock size can vary from very small to very large
 - Depends on stocking rates and available forages
 - Advent of “poly wire” fencing makes it very easy to change paddock sizes as needed.

MiG

- Why bother?
 - Better forage utilization
 - Opportunity to harvest or stockpile excess

Advantages

- Better forage persistence
- Improved utilization of forages (and weed control!)
- Better distribution of waste
- Better overall management
- Increased carrying capacity 20-30%

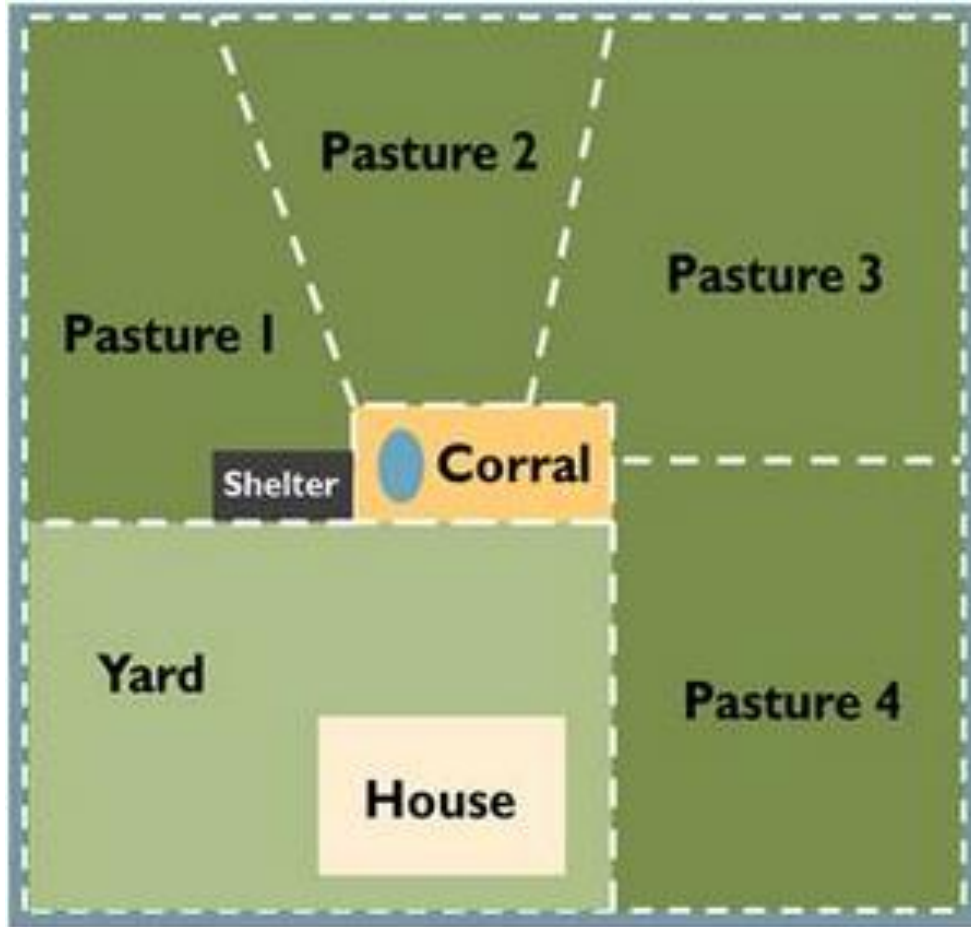
Disadvantages

- Not a set “recipe” for layout
- Overstocking
- Rest periods could be long
- Costs
- Water lines

Paddock Size?

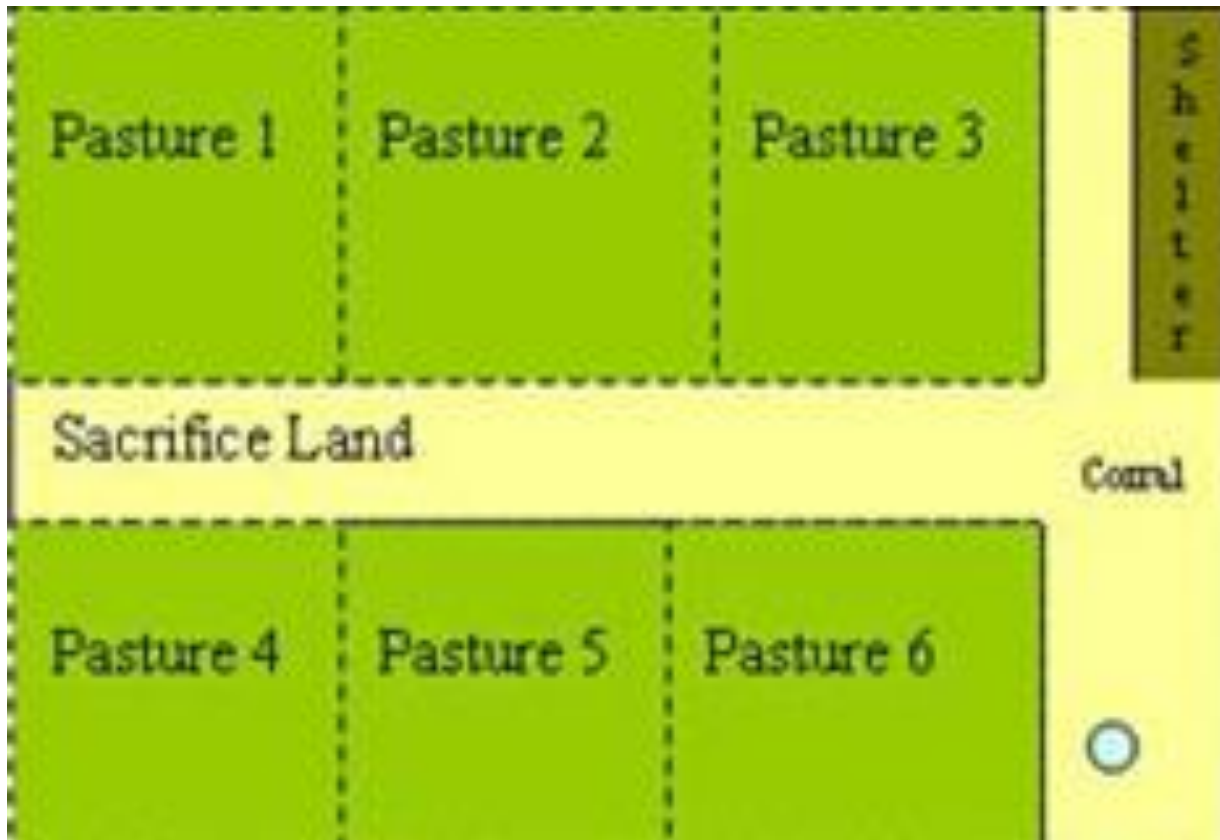
- Number of paddocks
- Acres per paddock
- Approximate pounds of dry matter per inch of available forage and days of rest needed per paddock
 - Bermudagrass 260 14-21
 - Bahiagrass 250 7-21
 - Ryegrass 250 7-15
 - Small Grains 150 14-21
 - Fescue 300 14-21

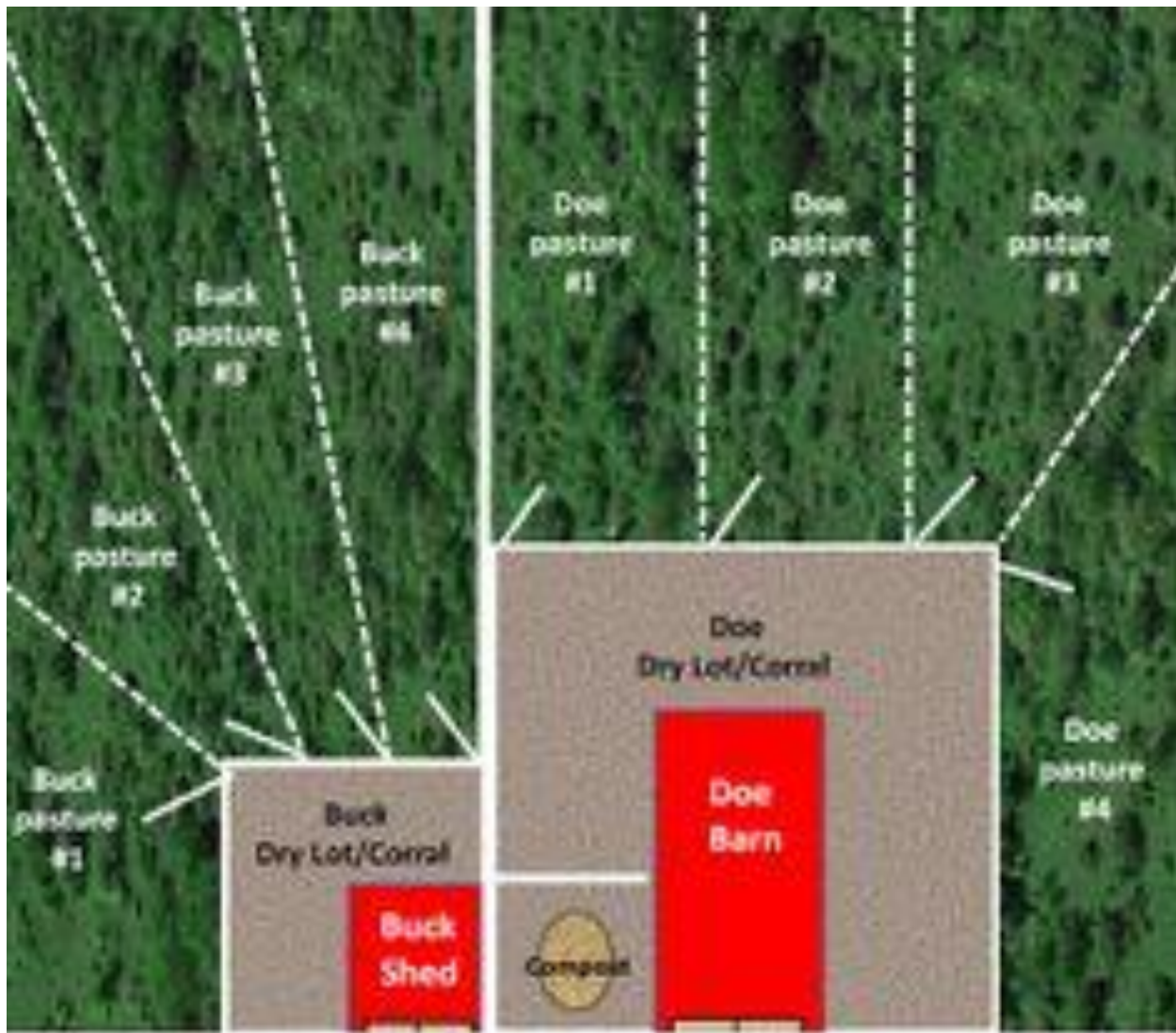
Rotational Grazing



Pasture Design

Permanent Rotation System

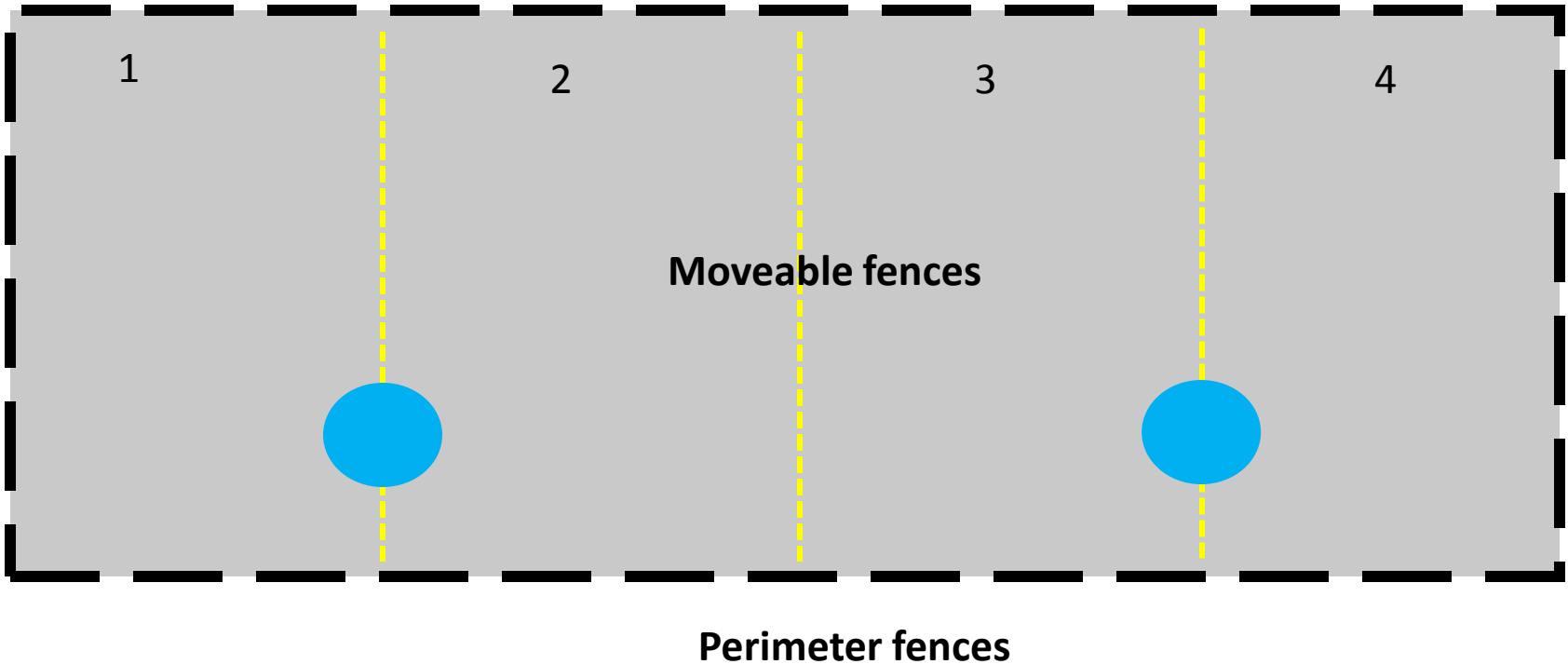




Rotational Pasture Management

Pasture Design

Polywire Paddocks



Seasonal Fluctuations

- Over-abundance
 - Move animals faster (speed up rotation)
 - Take one or more paddocks out of rotation and use for hay
- Under abundance
 - Move animals slower
 - Provide additional feed (hay, supplement)
 - Feed animals in sacrifice area

It doesn't have to be hard work!

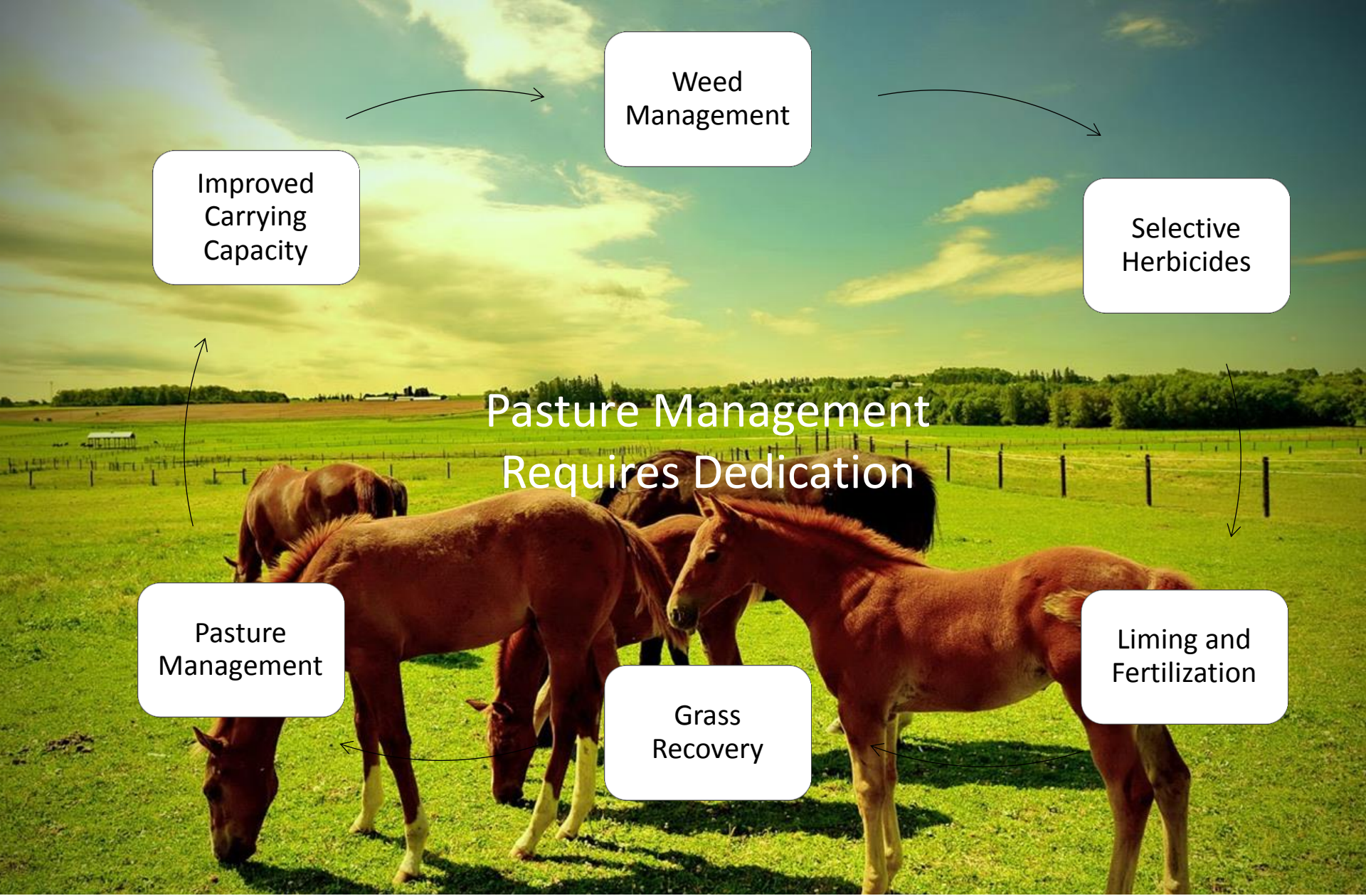


Keys to Happy Grazers

1. TLC
2. Fertilization
3. Proper fencing
4. Sacrifice area & supplemental feed
5. Maintenance vs. Renovation
6. Turn out when dry and ample grass growth

Deciding when to move

- Look down
- Look ahead
- Look at the animals
- Look Behind
- Look at the weather
- Look at the calendar



Impact of Weeds on Forage Yield and Quality

- Reduce forage quantity, quality, and stand longevity.
- Reduce carrying capacity.
- Competitive with forages.
- May be poisonous.
- Reduce forage intake.
- Effect pasture aesthetics.

Pasture Weed Management

- The best insurance against weed invasion is ***a vigorous and high quality*** pasture community.
- Weed and brush control are essential tools in pasture management programs designed to maximize forage production and optimize livestock performance.

Benefits of Using Herbicides

- Selective control of undesirable plants
- Efficacious
- Less labor required
- Favorable cost/benefit ratio
- Increased production of desirable forage grasses

Why are Producers Hesitant to Treat Pastures with Herbicides?

- A combination of factors
 - *Cost of herbicide*
 - Effects on legumes
 - Not sure herbicide will work
 - Timing of application and implications for grazing/haying
 - They think mowing is better for protecting legumes, is less expensive, and will do just as well at weed control!!!!

Approaches to Assessing the Benefits of Pasture Weed Control

- Controlling weeds shifts site resources to grow more grass.
- If weeds are present, horses tend to preferentially graze where weed pressure is less.
- When given a choice, horses will preferentially graze the weed free areas and the amount of grass will decline due to spot grazing and weed competition.

Keys to Successful Weed Management

- Identify the Weed
- What forage base is it in?
 - Fescue?
 - Bermuda?
- Maturity of the Weed
- Timing of Herbicide Application

Follow Directions!!

- Read the label
- Apply label Recommended Rates for weeds you are trying to control
- Are there Grazing Restrictions?

Questions??