

## **Management Intensive Grazing of Beef**

A Short Course given January 25, 2007 at the Southern SAWG 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference in Louisville, KY. This course was offered by the Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group in partnership with the USDA Risk Management Agency ([www.rma.usda.gov](http://www.rma.usda.gov)).

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### **Proceedings**

These notes provide information, discussions, and questions and answers from the course that are additional to the printed materials provided to participants (enterprise manuals, presentations, and other resources).

#### **DISCUSSION:**

- Land use considerations
  - Buffered areas should be planted on the contour of the land
  - Stream buffers are a way to protect the water
  - Wildlife food plots encourage natural wildlife and when planted close to streams, help keep erosion from the waterways
  - Plan fences on the contour to reduce erosion - also, cattle like to travel on the contour
- When fencing, 12.5 gauge wire is the best—it will hold up better and last longer
- With MIG the goal is to eliminate the need to feed hay by better utilizing the forages available.
- With MIG:
  - You can run 30 percent to 40 percent more cattle on your acreage
  - The livestock will utilize 70 percent of available forage vs. grazing only 30 percent without MIG
- Pasture Management:
  - Water for each paddock is very important. Cattle should not have to travel more than 800 feet for water, if possible.

- Do soil test. Use hi cal lime. The ratio between calcium and other nutrients greatly affects forage production.
- Neil Kinsey (a follower of William Albrecht) has a soil test lab in Missouri. He will do soil tests and make recommendations. Kinsey's Agricultural Services: 573.683..6227; [www.kinseyag.com](http://www.kinseyag.com).
- Plan to mow pastures at the full moon in August and stockpile growth after mowing—this will be your standing hay crop.
- Pastures need to have several species of forages available. Variety extends your grazing.
- Livestock recommendations:
  - Never keep a wild animal—they will cost you unnecessary money. They normally do not gain as well as docile animals and they tend to produce wild offspring.
- When you get home:
  - Walk your pastures and evaluate them
  - Examine your livestock for signs of stress
  - Determine which pastures need rest
  - Determine which will be in condition to graze the earliest
  - Decide which pastures can be easily divided
  - Examine water system to determine how it can be easily expanded

Just do it—you have to start to accomplish MIG.

Remember—it is ok to make mistakes. If you are not making mistakes, you are not doing anything.

Grass is like a bad haircut—it will grow back given enough rest and care.

Start small and let your system grow as your learning curve grows.