

**AUGUST L. HORMAY**  
RANGE MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

101 ACADIA STREET • SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94131

(415)587-3155

December 6, 1983

Theo H. Green  
P. O. Box 59A  
St. Ignatius, MT 59865

Dear Theo:

I'm satisfied you would profit from practicing rest-rotation grazing on your ranch. You would increase forage and livestock production and increase opportunity to reduce costly feeding. The range would improve continuously with the heaviest use you would care to make of your pastures.

A 3-pasture system best fits your situation. You have the pastures and other facilities to apply it. I strongly suggest you try it next year.

I will explain how you would graze the pastures. But first I'll touch on the basics of the system so you can better understand how it is applied.

Rest-rotation grazing is designed to promote and maintain the growth of the forage on the range. With the 3-pasture system this is accomplished through the application of three yearly grazing-resting treatments in each pasture. They are:

1. Treatment A      Graze seasonlong
2. Treatment B      Rest until seed-ripe then  
                         graze to the end of the season
3. Treatment C      Rest seasonlong

The three treatments comprise a treatment cycle. They are applied in ABC order in each pasture cycle after cycle indefinitely. In a given year each of the treatments is applied in a different pasture.

The following schedule shows how the treatments are applied in 3 pastures through two grazing cycles.

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Pastures					
Year	(1)	(2)	(3)		
Grazing Treatments					
1	A	B	C	)	
2	B	C	A	)	Cycle 1
3	C	A	B	)	
4	A	B	C	)	
5	B	C	A	)	Cycle 2
6	C	A	B	)	

Benefits with the system are derived mainly from the resting incorporated in the grazing treatments. The amount shown here for the 3-pasture system is essential. Grazing in rested fields should be avoided but can be tolerated in emergencies.

On the attached sheet is a diagram of your three pastures and a proposed pasture grazing schedule through one cycle of treatments. The diagram shows proposed fields in each pasture and the grazing treatments suggested for 1984.

Each of the pastures (1) (2) and (3) has to be divided into two fields (a) and (b) to provide for hay production. Hay is produced in the (a) fields one year and the (b) fields the next alternately over time. I scheduled hay production in the (b) fields in 1984.

Under the A treatment hay is cut at the growth stage that yields the best quality hay. Under treatments B and C it is cut at seed-ripe time. The designation A' is field (1b) refers to the period the forage is protected from grazing before cutting.

Electric fence such as you have been using should serve to split the pastures. Only the fence in the pasture getting treatment A need be charged in a given year. Here it is needed to protect the forage from use before it is cut for hay. No fences are needed in the fields getting treatments B and C.

Management of grazing under rest-rotation grazing is tied to plant growth stages rather than calendar dates.

In your case the grazing season, which is 12 months long, starts with greenup one year and ends with greenup the next. At greenup forage has reached grazeable height--about 2 inches.

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Seed-ripe is marked by the time seeds of the main forage plants are falling or seed-heads shattering. Use timothy or smoothbromgrass to judge this stage. Both grow along the road between the pastures.

Proceed as follows in grazing the pastures in 1984. Refer to the pasture diagram.

Pasture (1)

Field (a) Treatment A. Put all the cattle in the field at greenup.

Field (b) Treatment A'. Rest until hay is harvested in the field.

After hay harvested in (b) open gates between (a) and (b) and let cattle graze freely in both.

Pasture (2)

Fields (a) and (b)  
Treatment B. Rest from use until seed-ripe time, then harvest hay in (b). After harvest open gates between pastures (1) and (2) and let the cattle graze freely in both through to the end of the season.

Pasture (3)

Fields (a) and (b)  
Treatment C. Rest seasonlong. Hay can be cut in field (b) at seed-ripe if needed.

Feed in grazed pastures. Division fences can be activated in these pastures and the cattle distributed in fields as desired.

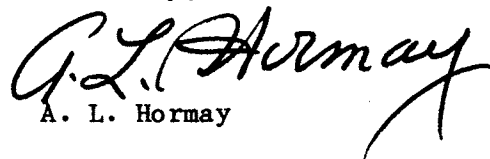
Do not graze in the pasture getting treatment C in 1984 (pasture 3). This pasture will be grazed first in spring in 1985. The old growth in it is needed to go along with the new young growth.

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You will have questions I'm sure so don't hesitate to write or phone. There is no obligation of any kind. But I'd appreciate hearing whether you decide to try the system next year or not.

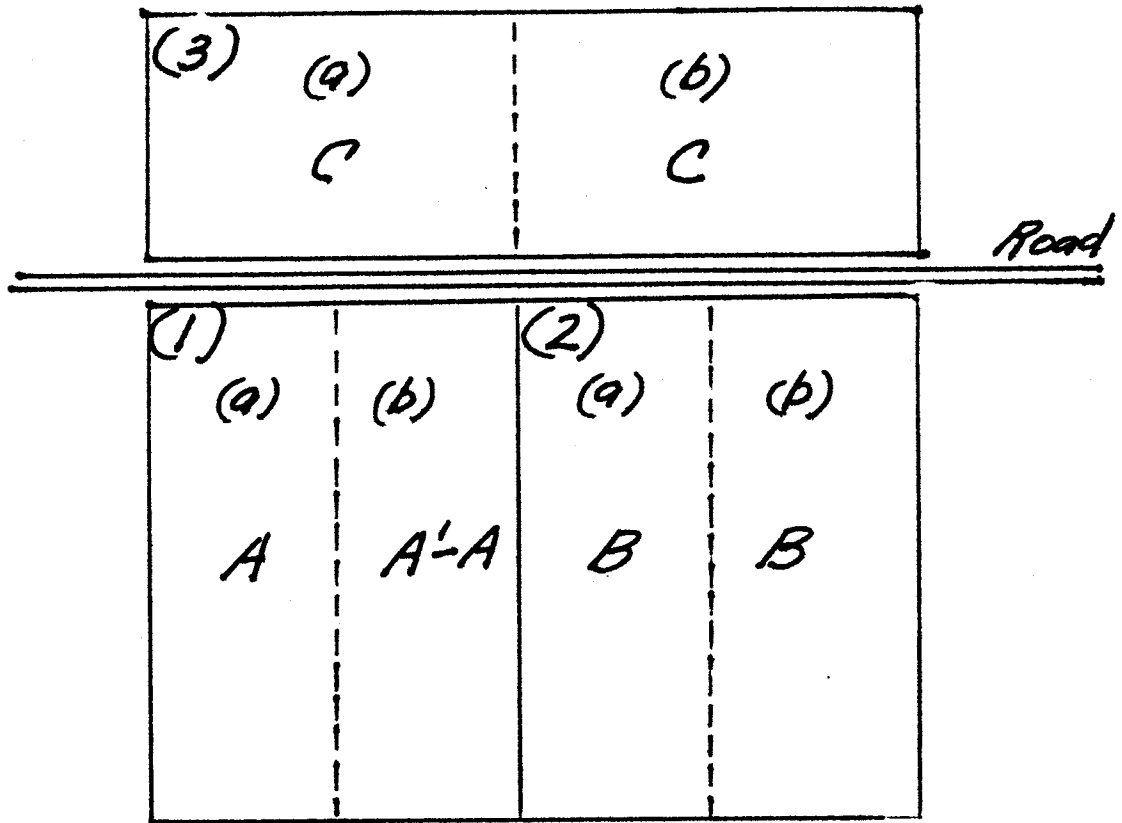
Pleasant holidays.

Sincerely,

  
A. L. Hormay

ALH/pbs

Attachment  
Pastures



Grazing Schedule

Year	Pastures and Fields					
	(1)		(2)		(3)	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
Grazing Treatments						
1984	A	A-A	B	B	C	C
1985	B	B	C	C	A-A	A
1986	C	C	A	A-A	B	B