

Rotational Grazing

What is rotational grazing, and why is it efficient? Rotational grazing is a system where a large piece of land is sectioned into several different areas called paddocks. One then moves the livestock from paddock to paddock, giving the livestock food and the grass rest. Rotational grazing can also be extremely profitable because more livestock could be kept on a large piece of land for the same time since it is divided into paddocks. Some ranchers put their livestock on grass and leave them on it until there is nearly nothing left. This is torturous to the grass, and it starves the livestock. After grass has been hit hard with livestock, it takes some time before it is back to being lush, green grass. When livestock are rotationally grazed, the grass has time to grow back into exuberant, green grass. By using the rotational grazing method, ranchers are keeping their livestock full and their grass abundant.

My father uses rotational grazing regularly. Throughout calving season, my dad, sister, and I check our cattle daily for newborn calves to tag. Every few days, there isn't enough grass left for the cattle in the paddock in which they are staying. When this is the case, we open a gate to another paddock so that the cattle may leisurely graze into it. After a day or two, the cattle have usually all moved into the new paddock, so we shut the gate to the used paddock in order for the grass to rest. If the cattle have not all moved into the next paddock, we push them into the new paddock before we shut the gate. Using rotational grazing during calving season is very helpful because my dad doesn't have to worry about moving cows while they are calving. Instead, he can focus on the newborn calves and just let the cattle into another paddock when the food supply is low. Using rotational grazing especially throughout calving season helps things run more efficiently.