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Pasture Balance

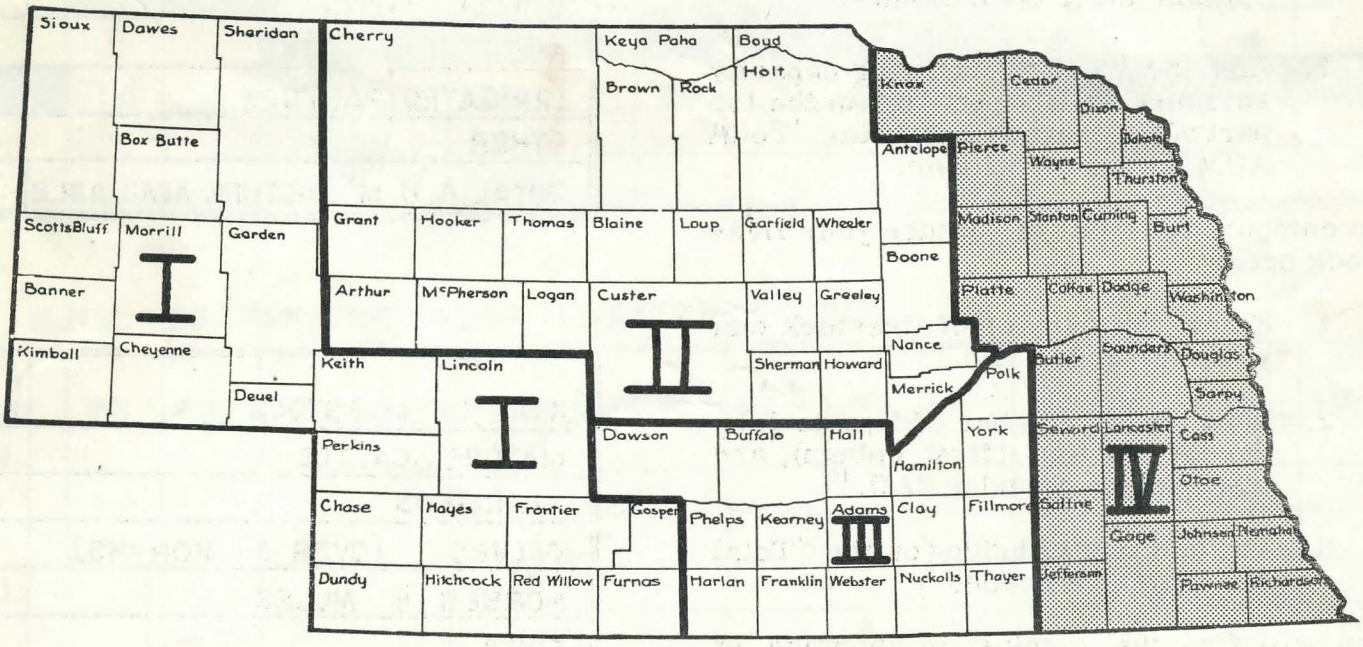
for Eastern Nebraska

A GUIDE FOR PLANNING AND ANALYZING
YOUR FARM PASTURE PROGRAM

Donald F. Burzlaff, Asst. Extension Agronmist

This material has been prepared for county agents and farmers working with the Farm and Home Development Program in Nebraska, but it can be used by any farmer to inventory and analyze his pasture program.

Within the state of Nebraska there is a wide variation in the production of forage crops, because of differences in soils, climate and management. Therefore, the state has been divided into four areas and pasture balances have been prepared for each of these areas (see map below).



I Panhandle and southwestern Nebraska, II north central Nebraska, III south central Nebraska, IV eastern Nebraska

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PASTURE BALA

In order to plan your pasture program you will have to know the carrying capacity of your available pasture. This is expressed in this chart in terms of Animal-Unit-Months (AUM). An AUM is the amount of forage required to pasture a mature animal for 30 days. You also need to know the number of AUM of pasture your livestock will need.

To compute the carrying capacity of your pasture:

1. Enter the number of acres that you have in different pastures under "Acres" (first column).

2. Multiply this figure by the carrying capacity "Per acre" (left-hand column under each month) and insert the product under "Total" (right-hand column under each month).

3. Add the "Total" carrying capacity columns, and the last line in the top part of the chart will give the "Total AUM pasture available."

To compute the AUM of pasture your livestock needs:

1. Enter the number of livestock that you have under "No."

2. Multiply the number of livestock by the "AU factor" (first colunn), and insert product under "AU."

3. The last line will give you the "Total AUM pasture needed".

You will find the surplus or shortage of pasture forage for each month by comparing the "Total pasture needed" with "Total Pasture available."

KIND OF PASTURE	ACRES	PE AC
BLUEGRASS		
NATIVE TALLGRASS		
NATIVE MIDGRASS		
BROMEGRASS		.2
BROMEGRASS & ALFALFA		
BROMEGRASS & LESPEDEZA		
INTERMEDIATE WHEATGRASS		.2
INT. WHEATGRASS & ALFALFA		
1 ST. YEAR SWEETCLOVER		
2 ND. YEAR SWEETCLOVER		.4
SPRING SEEDED OATS & VETCH		
RYE & VETCH		
SUDAN		
WINTER WHEAT		
RYE		
IRRIGATED PASTURE		
OTHER		
TOTAL A. U. M. PASTURE AVAILABLE		

KIND OF LIVESTOCK	A.U. FACTOR	N
MATURE CATTLE	1.0	
YEARLINGS	.7	
CALVES (OVER 3 MONTHS)	.3	
HORSES & MULES	1.0	
EWES	.2	
SWINE	.1	
TOTAL A.U.M. PASTURE NEEDED		

SURPLUS(+) OR SHORTAGE (−)		

The blacked-out areas in the chart indic

ANCE FOR EASTERN NEBRASKA

CARRYING CAPACITY OF YOUR PASTURE

APRIL		MAY		JUNE		JULY		AUG.		SEPT.		OCT.		NOV.	
ER CRE	TOTAL	PER ACRE	TOTAL	PER ACRE	TOTAL	PER ACRE	TOTAL	PER ACRE	TOTAL	PER ACRE	TOTAL	PER ACRE	TOTAL	PER ACRE	TOTAL
.2		.6		.6						.4		.2			
				.2		.6		.8		.6		.2			
				.2		.4		.4		.2		.2			
.2		.8		.8						.4		.2			
		1.0		1.0		.6		4		.6					
·2		.8		.8				.8		.6					
.2		.8		.8						.4		.2			
		1.0		1.0		.6		.4		.6					
								.4		.4		.4			
.4		1.4		1.4											
		.8		1.6											
.6		2.0										.4		.4	
						2.0		2.0		.4					
.6												.4		4	
.6		1.0										.4		.4	
		1.0		2.0		2.0		2.0		1.0					

A.U.M. OF PASTURE YOUR LIVESTOCK NEEDS

NO.	A.U.	NO.	A.U.	NO.	A.U.	NO.	A.U.	NO.	A.U.-	NO.	A.U.	NO.	A.U.	NO.	A.U.-

cate that grazing should be deferred.

Completion of the pasture balance will yield the following information which can be used as the basis of planning the grazing program of any given farm:

1. The total number of animal-unit-months of grazing that the pasture will provide during the grazing season.

2. The total number of animal-unit-months of pasture that will be required by the livestock. (Based on estimated numbers of livestock to be carried on the unit.)

3. The surplus or shortage of pasture forage for the year in terms of animal-unit-months of grazing. (This is obtained by comparing the pasture available with the pasture needed.)

Once this information has been determined the pasture program can be planned to provide additional pasture in months when there is a deficiency of forage. Likewise, plans to harvest excess forage can be formulated for months when there is a surplus.