Targeted Grazing for Fuel Reduction

What is it?
Targeted grazing is using livestock as a tool to accomplish specific vegetation management objectives; primarily site and timing specific fuel break creation and maintenance. Targeted grazing can also be used for other control or reclamation efforts commonly referred to as prescribed grazing, but this handout focuses on targeted grazing for fuel reduction.

What’s the primary goal?
To reduce fine fuel height and loading in the fuel-break strip and maintain fine fuels (grasses and forbs) reduction up to the start of the wildfire season.

Why is it important?
- Wildfire size is increasing in the west (e.g., “mega-fires” of recent years) so, fuels management projects need to be commensurate with the increased size of the wildfires.
- Livestock grazing provides a unique opportunity to manage fine fuels with a range management tool that is already in place on all lands regardless of ownership.
- Benefits include:
  - Reduced wildfire size
  - Minimized threat to life, property, and disruption of rangeland livestock operations
  - Avoided losses of forage and short- and long-term grazing opportunities
  - Decreased wildfire suppression and rehabilitation costs
  - Conserved important wildlife habitat and resource health
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Where has it been used?
Soda Fire Targeted Grazing Demonstration Area. The BLM Boise and Vale Districts implemented a 35-mile targeted grazing project along the base of the Owyhee mountains in the spring of 2018. It crossed 13 pastures authorized for grazing by five grazing permittees. The BLM Vale District also had two operators graze two of the pastures. The objective of the Soda targeted grazing fuel breaks is to have a stubble height of 2 inches or less 200 feet each side of designated road.
Elko District Targeted Grazing Demonstration Area. Implementation of this demonstration area utilized portions of four allotments (2.5 percent of total acreage) in different areas totaling 40 miles of strategically grazed fuel breaks (8,800 acres). Width of the fuels breaks ranged from 300 ft. to one half mile in width. The objective of the Elko District area was an average stubble height of 2-3 inches on cheatgrass.

Boulder Creek Wildfire/Demonstration Area One portion of the Elko District project experienced a wildfire and demonstrated positive effects of targeted grazing by reducing the need for additional suppression efforts where targeted grazing had occurred. The targeted grazing along the water haul road assisted in the containment of the fire and helped to keep the fire from burning into sage-grouse habitat in the nearby mountains.

Lakeview District Targeted Grazing Demonstration Area. A third targeted grazing demonstration study site is now underway near Lakeview, Oregon. A linear pipeline with water tanks aligned along the fuel break site will be used to maintain cattle grazing within the targeted area.

Where can you get more Information? Great Basin Fire Science Exchange website - A web page dedicated to both the strategic targeted grazing program and the dormant season grazing of invasive annual grasses is found on the Great Basin Fire Science Exchange website (www.greatbasinfirescience.org). Currently, the website contains relevant scientific publications on managing fine fuels with targeted grazing and will include results from the above Soda Fire and Elko District projects. There are plans to expand the website to include policies; planning and environmental assessment information; targeted grazing demonstration area information and reports; lessons learned; and targeted grazing workshop schedules.

Contact of the Boulder Creek wildfire with targeted grazing along a rural road near Elko, Nevada. No further fire suppression was needed here.
Targeted grazing reduces fine fuels (cheatgrass, Japanese brome and bulbous bluegrass) in southern Idaho.

**How can you get involved?**

- Provide comment on the proposed regulations to integrate flexibility in grazing schedules and stocking rates to deal with variable timing and productivity of grass fuels.

- Provide comment on the ePlanning site: [https://go.usa.gov/xyMqb](https://go.usa.gov/xyMqb).

- Fill out comment card at the comment station.

- Mail your comments to: Bureau of Land Management, ATTN: Seth Flanigan, 3948 S. Development Ave., Boise, ID 83705.