

Grazing Project Priority for

1) Does this grazing plan request or FA application address resource conservation needs, potential solutions exist which are appropriate and moderate to significant in nature, and site conditions are suitable for the proposed practices?

Examples of projects where the answer would be Yes or No are provided in Right Sidebar. If the project does not meet a significant level of resource concern or if the resource problems can be easily treated with simple and inexpensive changes in management, then answer No. The FA application will be labeled "low" priority in ProTracts. The status of the application will remain eligible.

Answer:

Planner Documentation

I have documented the landowner's objectives, resource concerns and potential practices. The answers above are answered using my best professional judgment.

When answering No to any of the questions above, print out a copy of this sheet, sign it and file it with the landowners application as justification for a 'Low Priority' classification in Protracts.

Planner Name

Planner(s) Signature

The intent of this evaluation is to determine if the proposed project meets minimum requirements for funding and then to adjust the priority of the project in Protracts.

It is expected that a site visit is necessary to determine the answers to these questions. The minimum requirements include addressing a grazing livestock resource concern, suitable site conditions for the proposed practices, willingness and ability of the customer to implement the necessary treatments, and the recommended treatment will incur more than a minimal expense to the customer.

Use the examples below to help identify projects which address resource conservation needs and are appropriate. If the application is similar in nature to any of the examples below in the 'No' section, answer No to question 1, document the reason why and then change the status of the landowner from 'High Priority' to 'Low Priority' in Protracts.

Question 1 Examples where 'No' would be the answer:

- The customer is interested in Prescribed Grazing but based on a preliminary VT Grazing Plan forage animal balance calculation the available grazing acres are not sufficient to support the existing number of grazing livestock. If the customer is not willing and able to mitigate the imbalance by providing supplemental feed or by converting existing crop or hayland to grazing acres, the grazing system will likely result in overgrazing and is not eligible for 528.
- The customer is interested in Prescribed Grazing but has already had 3 years of 528 payments on the same acreage under another USDA contract and is not able or willing to go to a 'higher level' of grazing management.
- The customer is interested only in exclusion fence due to livestock near a spring or along a short section of wetland area or stream (<200'), and the situation could easily be corrected with installation of an inexpensive portable fence, and livestock class is conducive to portable fence use (milking dairy herds conditioned to electric fence or horses with portable tape fence).
- The customer is interested only in installation of a new fence to replace an existing run-down fence and no other grazing system improvements or resource concerns will be addressed. (This is a fence maintenance issue.)
- The customer is interested in addressing a concern with a polyethylene livestock water tub which is in close proximity to a water course and resulting in water quality concerns; the concern could easily be managed by moving the tub to a location further away from the water course.
- Poultry operations alone are not eligible for 528 or associated grazing practices. Poultry may be part of larger grazing operation (multi-species grazing) which includes other grazing livestock types.

Question 1 Examples where 'Yes' would be the answer:

- A customer 'planning Objective' is to improve forage quality and ability of the grazing system to support the herd. More than 25% of current grazing system has a Pasture Condition Worksheet score of 'poor' or 'very poor' and changes in management have high potential to improve the concern and reach the objective.
- Overgrazing (<3" height) is obvious on multiple pastures, sufficient acres exist and customer is willing to correct the problem by improving management.
- The farm has had a VOF (Vermont Organic Farmers) pasture rule warning letter regarding the requirement to provide a minimum 30% dry matter intake from pasture, and there are available alternatives to improve the grazing system to meet those requirements.
- Livestock handling during winter is resulting in significant water quality concerns; eligible practices including fencing and or watering systems along with moving livestock to a more suitable site will help to resolve the resource concern.
- A one-to-one relationship with a grazing specialist (NRCS/SWAT/UVM) has already been established on this farm, grazing planning has commenced and recommended management or infrastructure improvements have been ID'd.
- An issue exists with a perennial or a significant intermittent stream where grazing animals are causing streambank erosion and/or water quality concerns above the conservation planning criteria (Quality Criteria) level and the concerns can be treated by installation of fence and /or water systems. Note that 528 is not a mandatory practice to treat this type of concern.