

Riparian Areas and Grazing

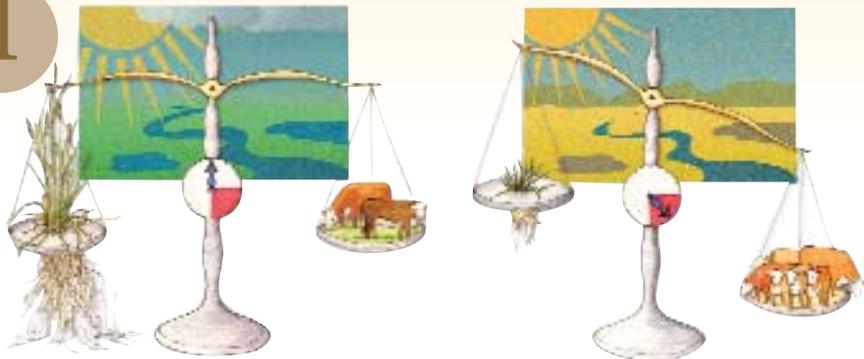
Range 101

Principles that Promote Healthy Riparian Vegetation

Healthy riparian areas are a foundation for your livestock operation. It begins with an understanding of the principles of range management and applying those principles to build and maintain the riparian foundation.

Good range management practices imitate the natural system and foster healthy native plant communities. The four key principles of good range management are:

1



Balance is the first principle to be achieved. Without it, a solid foundation for riparian and range management can't be built.

Balance animal demand with the available forage supply

- ◆ This means harvesting forage but leaving enough carryover or grass residue to protect plants and soil, conserve moisture, plus trap sediment.
- ◆ It's about understanding carrying capacity and setting annual stocking rates that don't exceed the available forage.

2

Distribute livestock evenly

- ◆ This means choosing from a long list of management tools to spread the grazing load over the landscape.
- ◆ It's about not allowing livestock to linger and overuse an area.

3



Avoid or minimize grazing the range or pasture during vulnerable times

- ◆ For riparian areas this may be when streambanks or shorelines are saturated with moisture and vulnerable to trampling.
- ◆ It could include times, like late summer or autumn when grasses have cured and woody plants are still green, palatable and vulnerable to overuse.

4

Provide effective rest after grazing

- ◆ Give plants time to rest when growing conditions are favourable to rebuild roots, energy supply and vigour.
- ◆ Energy stored in the roots of plants is needed to initiate growth in the spring.
- ◆ To be effective, rest has to occur during the growing season, not before or after the growth period.



Roots are the plant's battery. If you drain the battery by heavy grazing and no rest, the plant can't rebound.

