

# TO GRAZE OR NOT TO GRAZE...

Determining when to graze livestock after a fire can be a controversial and sometimes difficult decision. Much of the post-fire consideration depends upon site characteristics (percent slope, soil type), plants that grew in the area burned, and intensity of the fire.

As recovery starts and vegetation begins growing, emerging plants will be very attractive to grazing animals. Monitor such areas to prevent overuse of vulnerable plants when they are trying to recover from wildfire. Newly germinated plants, or existing ones putting out new foliage, need to collect and store enough energy to develop healthy root systems.

Land managers may decide to delay or limit grazing in burned areas due to these factors; however, in some instances, allowing animals to graze the year after the fire may not be detrimental. One way to limit the effects of grazing is to graze burned areas during the dormant season (late summer or fall). The plants have set seed and are no longer actively growing so the impact of grazing on the plants will be minimal.

Limiting grazing to light or moderate levels after the fire will ensure there is adequate plant material (stubble) for continued sustainability of that plant community.

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