1. Forages—Inventory

YES  NO

1. What types of forages are available on your farm? ________________________________

2. Do you have a variety of different forage species available? How many? ____________

3. How many acres of the following types of forage do you have on your farm? (See your NRCS agent for help with this—aerial photos can help you quantify.) ________________
   - Predominately cool season forages
   - Predominately warm season forages
   - Mixture of warm and cool season forages

4. Do you have pastures with: (estimate percentage of your farm in each category)
   _______ Legumes _______ Cool season annuals _______ Warm season annuals
   _______ Brush and weeds _______ Crop residue _______ Bioactive forages such as sericea or chicory
   _______ Pastures that can be stockpiled (held) for late fall/winter grazing

5. Do you use a rotational grazing system? If so, how intensively do you manage the grazing?

6. Do you use cross fences to improve pasture use?

7. How many days do your animals get most of their nutrition from grazing? ____________
   How could that be increased? ________________________________________________

8. When do you typically start grazing in the spring? _____________________________

9. When do you usually stop grazing in the fall/winter? ____________________________

10. When would you like to begin and end your grazing season? ________________

11. Are you grazing enough to minimize feed costs?

12. Could you use crop residue?

13. When do you have the most forage available? ________________

14. Does that coincide with lambing or kidding?

15. When is your best quality forage ready to graze? ____________________________

16. Could you graze a neighbor’s land?

17. What do you consider to be a weed on your farm? _____________________________
   Could it be a resource for you? ____________________________________________

2. Forages—Utilization

18. List the numbers and kinds of animals you usually graze.

   animal number animal number animal number

19. What is your stocking rate? Looking at the year, are you under-stocked, over-stocked, or close to right? ________________________________

20. What are the limiting factors in your grazing season/ system?

   _ Drought
   _ Rainfall distribution
   _ Soil fertility or type
   _ Availability of drinking water
   _ Poor stands of forage or low productivity of forage
   _ Lack of proper fencing
   _ Other(s) ________________________________
21. Do you know how to recognize characteristics of an overgrazed pasture?
- Forages grazed shorter than two inches (some forages are overgrazed at six inches)
- Very slow re-growth of forages
- Animals do not stay in their pasture
- Animals appear hungry
- Bare patches or areas that do not recover from grazing
- Weed invasion where grasses have been suppressed
- Reduced longevity of pasture stands
- Increased erosion due to more exposed soil

22. Do you have a strategy for dealing with a shortage of forage?
- Access to other pastures
- Reduce animal numbers by marketing
- Offer supplemental feed
- Other ___________________________________________________________________

23. Do you know how to recognize characteristics of underutilized pastures?
- Patches of over-mature forage and seed heads
- Forage wasted due to trampling
- Loss of low-growing plants due to shading
- Spot-grazing
- Increase in less-palatable forages due to overgrazing of preferred forages
- Reduction in quality of forage due to maturation
- Excessive dead material, which suppresses new growth

24. Do you have a strategy for dealing with excess forage?
- Harvest hay
- Increase animal numbers
- Lease extra pastures to other livestock producers
- Mow to keep pastures vegetative

25. How many days do you have to supply supplemental feed? ____________________________

26. What is your winter feeding program? ____________________________________________

27. Are you grazing year-round? ____________________________

28. What can you do to extend your grazing season? ____________________________

** Review the above section and make any notes about potential improvements, problems to solve, limitations to overcome. ____________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________
________________________________________________

Source: ATTRA’s Small Ruminant Sustainability Checksheet