What Every Grazier Needs to Know About Forestry

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My Goal Today

• Increase grazier’s comfort with concepts of forest management
• Increase likelihood of good forestry practices utilized by graziers
• Focus on forest more so than pasture
Define Forestry

A science-based system that attempts to manage (woody) vegetation for sustainable production of benefits that support the objectives of the owner.
Point 1. Pasture Management is Similar to Forest Management

- Species composition
- Plant health
- Establishment and growth
- Productivity
- Environmental constraints
- Plants respond to conditions
Similarities of Pastures and Forests

- Perennial plants in an environment with value for human/animal utilization
- You probably know more than you realize
- What you don’t know you are able to learn
Point 2. Most foresters were trained to exclude livestock.

- Foresters are important resources to help the owner optimize their forestry activities
- Timber thinking dominates most forester education
- Foresters think “continuous grazing” when you mention silvopasture
  - Words matter
Silvopasture is to Continuous Grazing

Control Has Been Lost

D. Moorhead, Univ. GA, www.bugwood.org

S. Katovich, USFS, www.bugwood.org
Foresters and Silvopasture

• Interview several foresters
• Be clear in your description of your objectives
• Be clear about your desired outcomes
  – Economic benefit
  – Livestock benefits
Point 3. Forestry should be deliberate.

- Basis for all private forest management decisions should be the owner’s objectives (assumes sustainable focus)
- Written management plans
  - Document the resource
  - Prioritize landowner actions
Be Deliberate

• Talk with family members about why they own woods and what is desired.
• Write a plan with a forester
• Implement the plan
Point 4. Stress matters to a tree.

- Trees can manage stressors
- Single stressors are common
- Sequential or accumulated stressors increase likelihood of growth decline and mortality

Examples
- Logging damage
- Off-site planting
- Ice storms
- Insect defoliation
- Continuous grazing
- Drought
Stress Matters

- Manage duration, stocking, size and timing of grazing to limit the likelihood of silvopasture rotational grazing as a stress
- Avoid adding to existing natural stressors
- Assess potential interaction of stressors and rotational grazing; plan for contingencies (e.g., defoliation or prolonged wet weather)
Point 5. Forests develop over decades
Forests Develop Over Decades

- Be patient
- Have realistic expectations
- Seek alternative strategies when necessary
- Plan ahead to avoid problems
- Plan ahead to optimize interactions with expected forest patterns
Point 6. Management activities vary depending on the stage of forest development
Management Varies Through Time

• Work with a forester to understand your options
• Some management costs money
• Some management generates money
• Take the correct actions to ensure long-term sustainability
Point 7. Forests include different species with different properties.
Differences Among Forest Trees

- Shade tolerance
- Soil and site demands
- Deer palatability
- Longevity
- Economic value
- Ease of regeneration
- Abundance of pests
Differences Among Forest Trees

• Know how trees differ

• Use species biology and specific management tools to favor or constrain certain species
Point 8. Any disturbance may increase the potential for undesirable invasions
Monitor for Invasive Species

• Be able to identify local invasive species
• Be alert to risks and problems that invasive species may create
• Look for invasive species before manipulating the forest (anticipate problems and solutions)
• Manage invasive species sooner than later
• Use Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM)
Point 9. Mix and match tools for creative solutions.
Creative Solutions

• Network with others to learn potential strategies
• Learn, think, adapt, apply
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