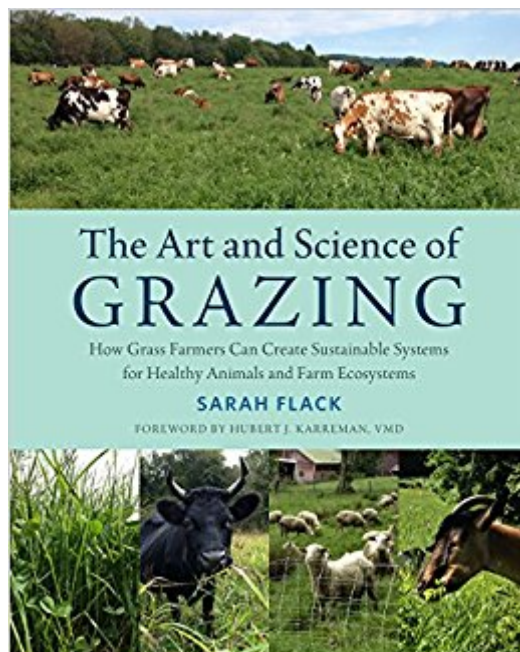




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The Art And Science Of Grazing: How Grass Farmers Can Create Sustainable Systems For Healthy Animals And Farm Ecosystems



Synopsis

Grazing management might seem simple: just put livestock in a pasture and let them eat their fill. However, as Sarah Flack explains in *The Art and Science of Grazing*, the pasture/livestock relationship is incredibly complex. If a farmer doesn't pay close attention to how the animals are grazing, the resulting poorly managed grazing system can be harmful to the health of the livestock, pasture plants, and soils. Well-managed pastures can instead create healthier animals, a diverse and resilient pasture ecosystem, and other benefits. Flack delves deeply below the surface of "let the cows eat grass," demonstrating that grazing management is a sophisticated science that requires mastery of plant and animal physiology, animal behavior, and ecology. She also shows readers that applying grazing management science on a working farm is an art form that calls on grass farmers to be careful observers, excellent planners and record-keepers, skillful interpreters of their observations, and creative troubleshooters. *The Art and Science of Grazing* will allow farmers to gain a solid understanding of the key principles of grazing management so they can both design and manage successful grazing systems. The book's unique approach presents information first from the perspective of pasture plants, and then from the livestock perspective, helping farmers understand both plant and animal needs before setting up a grazing system. This book is an essential guide for ruminant farmers who want to be able to create grazing systems that meet the needs of their livestock, pasture plants, soils, and the larger ecosystem. The book discusses all the practical details that are critical for sustained success: how to set up a new system or improve existing systems; acreage calculations; paddock layout; fence and drinking water access; lanes and other grazing infrastructure; managing livestock movement and flow; soil fertility; seeding and reseeding pastures; and more. The author includes descriptions of real grazing systems working well on dairy, beef, goat, and sheep farms in different regions of North America. The book covers pasture requirements specific to organic farming, but will be of use to both organic and non-organic farms.

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Customer Reviews

CHOICE- "This is a great book. After reading this work, the reviewer felt as if he could almost start his own grazing system; the title provides readers with the right questions to ask. Flack (a consultant on grazing and organic livestock) is a concise and articulate author and educator. She knows the value of telling a simple story and supporting it with relevant illustrations. She has an elegant style and knows how to use the power of repetition to show how no part of grazing management is wholly independent. She has biases with respect to the best grazing management, but is evenhanded in presenting multiple alternatives to grazing issues. Her case studies are aptly chosen to illustrate how the grazing management she advocates can be both sustainable and profitable. Each chapter plays a role and successively builds on the knowledge previously gained. As a manual for introducing good land stewardship, this book admirably succeeds. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All readers.

“I have long been fascinated by the logic of Andre Voisin’s system of Rational Grazing. Sarah Flack’s book has persuaded me that this could be a practical option for my own micro-dairy holding.”—Simon Fairlie, author of *The Art and Science of Grazing*. Sarah offers sound practical information for management of pastures in humid environments. Her years of experience and study allow her to explain the limitations of rotational grazing that were first highlighted by Andre Voisin and to confirm the soundness of Voisin’s Rational Grazing.

“With feet firmly planted in both practice and science, Sarah Flack introduces pasture-based livestock production in a way that is sure to encourage and empower.”—Joel Salatin, author of *Salad Bar Beef*

“The Art and Science of Grazing is a beautiful and highly useful book. Read it, learn how to manage pasture well, then do it! Sarah Flack’s good counsel can save your farm and family and bring you happiness. What else is there?”—Bill Murphy, author of *Greener Pastures on Your Side of the Fence*

“Amidst the flood of information on modern grass farming, Sarah Flack performs nothing short of a rescue operation, distilling the art and science of

grazing into an immensely useful book. Experienced hands will learn plenty, but newcomers won't be overwhelmed. *The Art and Science of Grazing* is sure to become one of the most well-worn books on graziers' bookshelves.

—Fred Walters, publisher, Acres U.S.A.

“Sarah Flack has written a wonderful guide to sustainable grazing. She discusses fundamental principles and specific practices that make her book meaningful for anyone interested in the art and science of grazing.

—Fred Provenza, professor emeritus, Department of Wildland Resources, Utah State University

“More and more farmers and ranchers are thirsting for information on animal husbandry that truly protects and regenerates natural resources while enhancing economic viability. Sarah Flack is answering the call. In a readable, user-friendly format, her book provides concrete information and plenty of inspiration. An invaluable resource for anyone raising grazing animals.

—Nicolette Niman, author of *Defending Beef*

“Sarah Flack's *The Art and Science of Grazing* is an excellent guide for anyone with an interest in the regenerative potential of livestock grazing done right. Whether you are a farmer, rancher, conscientious consumer of meat, or concerned citizen of the planet, Flack's clear, concise prose explains how good grazing is a natural fit in our world.

—Courtney White, author of *Two Percent Solutions for the Planet*

“Intelligently managed grazing has tremendous potential to mitigate climate turmoil, and *The Art and Science of Grazing* contains everything you need to know to do the very best job of grazing. Sarah Flack explores every aspect of holistic pasture management in a most delightful manner that will help all who consult her book, from beginners to the most experienced graziers, to achieve their maximum potential in healing the Earth with livestock and land.

—Jack Lazor, author of *The Organic Grain Grower*

“*The Art and Science of Grazing* is a comprehensive guide for new and experienced graziers. If I had to choose one book as a reference on grazing for both new and experienced livestock graziers, this would be it. The book is well organized, containing many excellent illustrations and beautiful photographs. Sarah Flack shares her knowledge on all aspects of grazing with emphasis on key principles that apply to all farms in humid regions. Multiple case studies provide interest and wisdom gained by farmers who have developed diverse, successful grazing operations throughout the country.

—Guy Jodarski, DVM, CROPP Cooperative/Organic Valley

Sarah Flack is the author of *Organic Dairy Production* and a nationally known consultant on grazing and organic livestock. She grew up on a Vermont family farm that used management-intensive grazing and mob stocking. She later studied Holistic Planned Grazing and pursued graduate studies

on pasture management at the University of Vermont. She has written extensively about grass farming and is known for teaching workshops that take a practical approach to applying the science of grazing. Sarah has successfully helped many farmers create positive change in their pastures, soils, livestock, finances, and farm-family quality of life.

There is so much good information - technical information - it is sometimes overwhelming how much there is to know. I am gaining a better understanding of rotational grazing and all the grasses and it's exciting! Thank you!

Great Book on soil management through rotational grazing

I very much enjoyed reading this book. I found it informative and loaded with lots of practical details.

Awesome book, great tool for getting started on grazing pasture!

I love to read, and will state that at the outset. I moreover love to read about one of my undying passions, Sustainable Agriculture in general, and grazing in particular. Sarah Flack's recently published book, "The Art and Science of Grazing" is an absolute "must read" for anyone interested in grazing and animal agriculture. This book is a comprehensive tome covering all facets of grazing and pasture management for farmers who have beef cattle, sheep, goats, and dairy cattle. It is published by Vermont's Chelsea Green Publishing company which has a history of producing excellent quality books on a variety of sustainable topics. If anyone was in need of an excellent book to teach a course on grazing, then you need look no further than this book to instill new techniques and knowledge in your audiences. I heartily recommend this edition and rate it with five stars. Why do I rate it so high? Quite succinctly, Sarah Flack has provided a treasure trove of information and techniques based on sound ecological practices, which can support economically viable farming with animal agriculture. This is a four part book with fifteen chapters and several appendices. Part One "Laying the Groundwork" has two chapters; Benefits of Good Pasture Management, and Types of Grazing Systems. Part Two "Grazing from the Plant's Perspective" has four chapters; Grazing Adapted Plants, Pasture Soil Health, Managing Pasture Plants, and Common Pasture Plants. Part Three "Grazing from

the Animal's Perspective has six chapters; The Unique Digestive Ability of Ruminants, Ruminant Nutrition from Pasture, Meeting Livestock Nutritional Needs, Grazing Behavior, 100 Percent Grassfed, and Health Concerns. Part Four "Designing and Managing a Grazing System" has three chapters; Pasture Math, Calculating Acreage, Grazing System Design and Infrastructure, and the final chapter, Putting it All Together. These chapters are followed by several excellent appendices dealing with pasture problems, pasture planning worksheets, pasture monitoring, certification programs, and a list of resources. The book is printed on very high quality paper, and is loaded throughout with high quality color photos. Each chapter is filled with the latest knowledge available to support this wonderful and growing endeavor of grazing management. I also found it to be written with flawless grammar, spelling, and editing throughout which is always a pleasure to see. As our agricultural world slowly changes to include more humane livestock husbandry methods, and ecologically benign methods to support those concepts, this book provides knowledge and information for graziers to not only "talk the talk" but to "walk the walk". In addition to my being an agricultural educator dealing with grazing management for a variety of clientele, I am an active farmer that grazes beef cattle, sheep, and a variety of pastured poultry. My knowledge base has increased a good bit on this topic since reading this book.

This is a great book for an introduction to proper grazing management. Really, start here and then go on to others if you want to go a bit deeper. Thorough, well written, scientific, adequately detailed to be useful but not so detailed that it is overwhelming. The photographs are very useful. It is the first book on these topics that has some good grass pictures. Instead of talking about grass and discussing the measurement of grass it just straight up shows what good grass looks like. It also proves that the authors actually achieved what they describe. It isn't just a bunch of fanciful drawings! I really enjoy how it discusses grazing from the plant's perspective THEN the animal's. This is how it should be. Why not five stars? Well, mostly because I feel leaves out some very important corollary topics associated with grazing. The first being watering the animals and designing paddocks. Perhaps because the author wanted the book to be universally applicable, it didn't go into much detail here, not really enough to give the reader all they needed to be off and running. Also, it doesn't go into fence construction (of permeant fences) and doesn't really go into any depth in regards to shade and trees. To me, silvopasture is the next big thing in grazing, as it has now been demonstrated conclusively that cool season grasses generally grow as well or

BETTER under light shade (the kind of shade the Juglandaceae family, Locusts, and some others cast). But really, this book is worth every penny. It is well written, indexed, the bibliography is good. It is frank, practical and has plenty of hands on info and demonstration. This has replaced "Greener Pastures on Your Side of the Fence" by Bill Murphy in my mind as the first grazing book one should read).

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