

# HEALTHY LIVESTOCK HEALTHY STREAMS

Management practices that work for you, your livestock and the environment.



Livestock are an integral part of the agricultural economy and a valued recreational asset. Utilizing some simple management practices can ensure healthy livestock and productive pastureland. These practices will also lead to healthy riparian areas.

**Livestock and stream health:** Livestock can cause serious damage to riparian areas by:

- Trampling banks, increasing the sediment load to the water.
- Damaging riparian vegetation, which increases water temperature, flooding and erosion problems.
- Urinating and defecating in or near the water, resulting in high levels of nutrients and fecal coliform bacteria.
- Compacting soil, which decreases the amount of moisture that can be absorbed during floods and rainstorms.



**Manure and mud:** Manure and mud can have serious impacts on livestock health and water quality:

- They contain nutrients and bacteria that can harm water quality.
- Livestock that stand in manure and mud are more susceptible to diseases, such as abscesses, rain scald or thrush.
- Manure and mud are breeding grounds for insects including flies and mosquitoes that can carry diseases.
- Difficult working conditions and unpleasant odors can result from a build-up of manure.



This is one in a series of fact sheets to assist agricultural producers and owners of rural acreage in taking steps to benefit property, protect water quality and conserve natural resources. The Spokane Conservation District (SCD) offers assistance to landowners in implementing conservation practices. For more information, contact the SCD at (509) 535-7274.



**Livestock Watering** Water for livestock should be provided away from streams and lakes. This will prevent erosion of banks and deposit of nutrients and bacteria in the water. Several options are available, including electric or solar powered pumps, gravity fed pumps, as well as nose pumps, to get water to the animals.



**Grazing and Pasture Management** Proper grazing techniques and pasture management enhance the health of livestock and pastures, while protecting water quality. Techniques include:

- Leave at least 6 inches of grass stubble. This allows the grass to recover better and prevents runoff from entering waterways.
- Allow pastures to rest and rejuvenate by rotating animals on subdivided pastures. This allows the growth of a better root system that prevents soil erosion and increases grass production. Pasture rotation will prevent compacted soils and allow for adequate absorption of water to further aid pasture health.
- Fence livestock out of riparian areas. Where this is not possible, provide water, shade and salt in other areas to encourage livestock to graze and loiter away from riparian areas.



**Managing Manure and Mud** Appropriate management practices protect livestock from potential impacts of manure and mud, and keep manure from polluting lakes and streams.

- Locate animal waste and compost piles on flat surfaces away from streams or drainage areas and cover them during wet periods to prevent runoff from polluting streams and lakes.
- Create riparian buffers along streams and plant vegetation around pasture areas to absorb moisture and runoff.
- Utilize manure as fertilizer. Be careful to apply the appropriate amount, as excess manure will wash into nearby streams. Leave a buffer between areas where manure is applied and waterways to prevent runoff into the water.

**For more information and assistance:** The Spokane Conservation District can provide additional information on each of these practices, assist in determining the most appropriate practices for your property and help to identify potential funding sources to assist in project implementation. (509) 535-7274 or <http://sccd.org>

## Funding Opportunities for Livestock Management

Several funding sources are available for eligible livestock management practices, including:

- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - Annual payments for land set-aside to protect riparian habitats. Cost-share funds are also available for fencing and planting trees.
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP): Technical, financial and educational assistance. Up to 75 percent in cost-share money to assist in implementation of conservation practices and address regulatory requirements.
- Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA): Cost-share funds available to implement eligible livestock management techniques.
- Other opportunities may be available. Ask the Conservation District for details.



**Conservation  
is in our hands**