

Name of Practice: EXTENSION OF WATERING AND GRAZING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS
VACS Program Specifications for No. SL-7

This document specifies terms and conditions for the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program's Extension of Watering and Grazing Management Systems best management practice which are applicable to all contracts entered into with respect to that practice.

A. Description and Purpose

This practice provides a management system to ensure adequate surface cover protection to minimize soil erosion. The system will reduce sediment, nutrients and pathogen loads in runoff.

This practice will improve the quantity, quality and utilization of forage for livestock and will reduce the risk of surface and groundwater contamination from non-point source pollution from pastures by assuring that an adequate stand of forage is available to absorb runoff and reduce pollutants.

B. Policies and Specifications

1. All fields that receive cost share under this practice must have had all livestock previously excluded or concurrently being excluded from all live streams or live water. Any field that is part of a rotational grazing system is eligible. Rotational grazing systems without live water previously or concurrently excluded do not qualify for this practice.
2. This practice may be installed, in conjunction with a CREP CP-22 and CP-29 contracts, to implement rotational grazing on those fields receiving watering facilities to increase forage cover through the proper grazing and forage management techniques that will allow a pasture to rest and re-grow its cover. The system receiving cost-share should reflect the least costly, most technically feasible, environmentally effective approach to resolve the existing water quality problem. This practice cannot be used with a CREP CP-21 or CP-23, as these practices are applied on cropland only.
3. A written Grazing Management Plan and Operation and Maintenance plan that includes all acres in the grazing system must be prepared, implemented and followed. Factors to be addressed should include water sources, environmental impact, soil fertility maintenance, access lanes, fencing needs, wetlands, minimum cover or grazing heights, carrying capacity of the land, and rotational schedules. Plans may be prepared using VA Graze, NRCS FOTG, Forage Balance Sheet, or other applicable resources.

4. Grazing (including flash grazing) and haying are not allowed in the protected riparian area during the lifespan of this practice.
5. To supply water, state cost-share and tax credit are authorized for:
 - i. Installing pipelines, watering facilities, hardened pads around watering facilities, storage facilities, cisterns, troughs (portable or fixed), and pumping plant (if needed to meet pressure system requirements). When additional water is needed in CREP fields, the FSA CREP Waiver Process should be considered before authorizing VACS cost-share.
 - ii. A water supply system can include a portable system to meet the management requirements necessary for systems operation, rather than a large number of permanent water facilities.
6. Portable or temporary system components (fencing, etc.) cannot be utilized in other areas or moved from fields utilized in the system plan. The replacement costs of portable components which fail to function properly during the lifespan of the practice are considered maintenance expenses and are the responsibility of the participant.

A portable water supply system is any system or component (i.e. trough, pipe, etc.) that is:

 - i. Commercially available or farmer constructed;
 - ii. Large enough to provide a timely and sufficient volume of water for the livestock to be contained in a specific area for which the system is designed;
 - iii. Capable of being maintained in a stable position and protected from any damage while the system or component is in use;
 - iv. Capable of being moved in a timely manner from one location to another within the acreage for which the system is designed.
7. The primary water use of the components which were installed with state cost-share and tax credit must be for the purpose of providing water for livestock. However, incidental use is not prohibited. State cost-share and tax credit is not permitted for any electrical, structural, or plumbing supplies, including pipe, or associated construction costs for developing any incidental use. When an incidental use is anticipated, the District Board should consider the applicant's intent before approving the request. Incidental use will be documented in the applicant's file.
8. To facilitate rotational grazing systems, cost-share and tax credit are authorized for temporary or permanent interior fencing and fence chargers (electric or solar) used to electrify permanent or temporary fencing that is part of the grazing system.
9. Any installation of permanent fencing to bring previously unused fields or pastures

into the grazing system is the responsibility of the participant, and cannot receive state cost-share or tax credit assistance. Permanent fencing may be installed under this practice to divide existing pasture units only to better manage rotational grazing.

10. No state cost-share and tax credit is authorized under the practice for any installation that is:
 - i. PRIMARILY for wildlife, dry lot feeding, barn lots, or barns.
 - ii. To make it possible to graze crop residues, field borders, or temporary or supplemental pasture crops.
 - iii. For boundary fencing or water supply systems used to establish new pastures not currently in use.
 - iv. For the purpose of providing water for the farm or ranch headquarters.
11. This practice is subject to NRCS Standards 382 Fence, 472 Access Control, 516 Livestock Pipeline, 533 Pumping Plant, 561 Heavy Use Area Protection, 575 Trails and Walkways, 578 Stream Crossing, and 614 Watering Facility.
12. All practice components implemented must be maintained for a minimum of 10 years following the calendar year in installation. When funded concurrently with an SL-6N/W or a CREP practice, the SL-7 must be maintained for a matching lifespan (i.e. 10 or 15 years). The lifespan begins on Jan. 1 of the calendar year following the year of certification of completion. By accepting payment for this practice, the recipient agrees to maintain the practice and the associated exclusion fencing for the specified lifespan. This practice is subject to spot check by the District throughout the lifespan of the practice and failure to comply may result in reimbursement of state cost-share funds and/or tax credits. The associated exclusion fence may be eligible for a Continuing Conservation Initiative practice.

C. Rate(s)

1. The VACS payment shall be based on the approved estimated cost or eligible actual cost, whichever is less, and shall vary by the minimum fence setback and lifespan of the practice. The VACS payment rates are shown in the table below:

Minimum fence setback (from the top of streambank)	Lifespan	VACS payment rate
35'	15 years	80%
	10 years	75%
<35'	15 years	55%
	10 years	50%

2. As set forth by Virginia Code, the Commonwealth currently provides a tax credit for implementation of certain agricultural best management practices as discussed in the Tax Credit Guidelines of the VACS Manual. If a participant receives cost-share, only the participant's eligible out-of-pocket share of the project cost is used to determine the tax credit.
3. Exclusion fencing must be in place prior to issuing cost-share and/or tax credit for SL-7.

D. Technical Responsibility

Technical and administrative responsibility is assigned to qualified technical DCR and District staff in consultation, where appropriate and based on the controlling standard, with DCR, Virginia Certified Nutrient Management Planner(s), NRCS, DOF, and VCE. Individuals certifying technical need and technical practice installation shall have appropriate certifications as identified above and/or Engineering Job Approval Authority (EJAA) for the designed and installed component(s). All practices are subject to spot check procedures and any other quality control measures.

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