

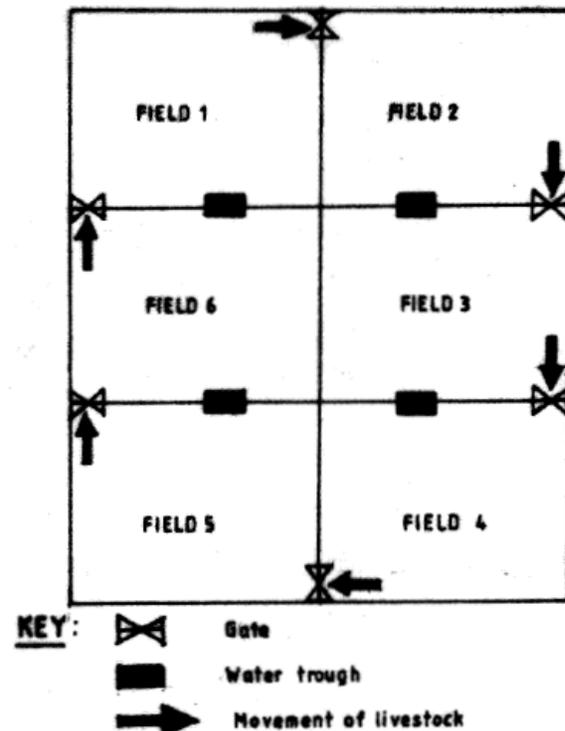
What is rotational grazing?

Rotational grazing is used to allow horses to be put out on limited pasture. This allows your horses to be able to graze fully in one area before being moved to another when the grass becomes short, saving your pasture life. Pastures should also be managed as a crop, focusing on the care needed to help it regrow and thrive. The area of the country you are located in will influence how you manage your pastures. Making sure you have proper water supply for regrowth and a proper consideration for the grass species you have in your pastures to allow management of your fields are crucial to sustaining a proper rotational grazing system.



How to set up a rotational grazing system

Setting up a rotational grazing system consists of 1-2 acres of per horse, allowing them to have access to the proper amount of dry matter they need in their diet. Fertilizing your fields yearly according to a soil test results will help you properly manage your fields for optimal yield. Having a minimum of four paddocks or cells is used for an effective system with a herd of 2-3 horses, keeping in mind that the more areas the better.



[als/equine/news/2012/grazing-systems-for-horses](https://www.equinenews.com/news/2012/grazing-systems-for-horses)

[/portal/nrcs/detail/nj/technical/landuse/pasture/?cid=nrcs141p2_01885](https://portal.nrcs/detail/nj/technical/landuse/pasture/?cid=nrcs141p2_01885)

[les/29524/rotational-grazing-time-it-right-for-optimal-pastures](https://www.equinenews.com/news/2012/grazing-systems-for-horses)

How does rotational grazing help your fields?

The amount of fields you can use depends on the amount of horses in your herd. Typically you would like your horses to graze for up to a week on one area, ideally with rest times for each pasture of 20-30 days, or long enough for re-growth of the grass to be six to eight inches high, on average for all grasses. During spring months with lots of rain and moisture, fields can take as little as 21 days to recover. During hot and dry summer months, fields may take 45-60 days to properly recover. Horses should be moved off the area when they have grazed down the grasses to 3-4 inches in height. The field then should be mowed down to create a uniform height of 4 inches, allowing a more even regrowth from uneaten grass. This also helps by allowing the uneaten grasses to not overshadow the eaten down grass, giving the ability to regrow.

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Here is a helpful chart to use for rest times on your pastures:

COOL-SEASON GRASSES:

14-16 days during first rotation (April)
20-30 days during fast growth (May -late June) and in the fall
30-40 days during slow growth (summer and winter)

WARM-SEASON GRASSES:

14-21 days during early fast growth
21-28 days during normal growing conditions
35-45 days during slower growth

LEGUMES:

24-32 days throughout growing season
40-45 days for seed production

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