

FORMAN RANCH, INC.
GRAZING PLAN NOTES
2025

Forman Ranch, Inc. leases pasture from Indian Creek Holdings, LLC located in Wasco and Jefferson Counties in N Central Oregon (Antelope) and from Island Ranch Properties, LLC located in Harney County Oregon (Burns) and on occasion we rent pasture for grazing from close neighbors. Lowell and Mary are owners of both LLCs. Ownership of much of the Wasco County portion has been in the family for many years with ancestors of both Lowell and Mary arriving in the Antelope area in 1877. Our three grandkids have great great grandparents who raised livestock in the valley as early as 1880.

We have less than 1,000 acres of public land leases in Wasco County. These public acres have little or no water to support livestock or wildlife and are therefore incorporated into grazing with our private acres. All land in Harney County is privately owned and Harney County is a bird watchers paradise with thousands of ducks, geese and other waterfowl stopping off in their spring and fall migrations. An avalanche of Snow geese is quite a site!

We are a beef cattle operation, and our land produces forage for our livestock and wildlife to graze. Our Antelope and Burns properties are located 200 road miles apart and we have typically utilized the Harney County property for late spring through late fall grazing on 'good years', as this property is a meadow that is flood irrigated from the Silvies River when water is available. On Dry years we reduce cow numbers and grazing time at both locations.

Stock water in Harney County comes from five wells located on 1,645 acres. There are 20 pastures with permanent fencing on these acres and since purchasing the ranch in 2013 we have buried water lines from the existing wells to an additional 15 water troughs. The purpose of the troughs is to have a clean, fresh water source for the cattle and to better utilize the grass. This is accomplished by using temporary electric fencing to get increased animal impact and to improve the nutrition of the available forage. We are able to graze 400-500 pair there for 6 – 7 months without supplemental feed. We have grazed the cattle as one herd in some years and as two herds in others. On our driest year (2022) we had 115 head on this location for only 10 weeks. It was a tough year!

The standing native meadow grass is swathed in July as soon as the fields are dry enough to allow such and then the windrows are bunch raked so the cows can utilize the forage into the late fall. Bunch raking is the process of creating 'mini haystacks' within the windrows to allow the grass to dry and cure by shedding the rain and wind which helps retain the protein value of the feed. Timely swathing of the grass can help get ahead of the pepper weed which is an invasive and undesirable forb growing on our native meadows. Cattle eat the greener grass between the windrows first and the mini stacks are more palatable for fall grazing. At times we provide mineral tubs for the cattle in late fall. Grazing is planned by the person on location taking into consideration the rate of growth of the grass and the condition and attitude of the cattle. We make an effort to graze all acres early in the season before swathing and then come back one or more times to utilize regrowth and the bunch rake.

Our breeding season is 60 days, so bulls are pulled near the end of July. We move cattle often during this time to keep their nutrition at the highest level possible to increase conception. Frequent moves allow observation of the cattle as they pass through a gate and each move reorganizes the herd for better coverage by the bulls. After the bulls are pulled and during the hotter months, moves are slowed some. Fly control is an important consideration during the summer as well. The mosquitoes are definitely plentiful when there is water standing in the fields. Planning moves to have the cattle closer to corrals when vaccinating or working them is considered as well especially when calves are young.

Depending on weather and range conditions in either location, we may ship the calves back to Antelope for weaning in the fall or instead, ship the cows home and keep the calves on the cut meadow pastures for health reasons if it is dry and dusty in the hills. Both the dry cows and weaned calves are grazed in Antelope during winter and early spring months. Proper nutrition in the last trimester is essential to allow a cow to rebreed 75-100 days after calving. The cows calve on the Antelope property in March and April which allows the calves to be old enough to transport to Harney County when grass is available.

We do feed and keep a close eye on our first calf heifers who calve for 25 days in March in a 200 acre pasture. We find cows do better when they are not confined and are allowed to do what a cow does naturally.....go away from the herd and give birth which allows the cow and her calf some space.

The property in Wasco County includes 14,000 acres in 5 locations with an elevation range of 2,200 ft to 3,200 ft. Three locations are contiguous with the other two separated by 4-5 miles to the first and an additional 3-4 miles to the second. Cattle can easily be trailed between all areas or county roads do exist should we need to haul animals. The properties are located such that we can stop over at one on the way to the furthest.

Herds of mule deer, antelope and Rocky Mountain elk reside on the Wasco County property year around and their grazing needs must be considered as well as the cattle groups. These large wildlife species are also seen occasionally on the Burns Property. We have had a very large flock (200-300) of wild turkeys in Antelope for nearly 20 years with other species of ground nesting birds residing here as well as seasonal migration of duck and geese through the area. The turkeys and other birds are important to mitigate bugs and mosquitos.

About 80 acres in Wasco County have water rights and are irrigated from wells for 4-5 months each year. The yearlings are run on the irrigated or sub irrigated pastures during breeding or until they are shipped to the feedlot in July or August. Approximately 1,500 acres consist of previously dry land farmed fields which have been seeded to grass and legumes. We are in the process of reseeding some portions of these fields each year. The balance of the property is hillsides with bunch grass and annuals, sage brush, junipers and plenty of rocks and bluffs. Invasive plant species include knapweed, Canadian thistle and scotch thistle. Grazing is planned to disturb the areas with these problem plants as much as possible.

The main source of water on our north central Oregon property is springs, some developed and others not. This is a major benefit to us. We are also blessed with 5 miles of Indian Creek running through the property. Some smaller creeks flow into Indian Creek and Indian Creek runs into Antelope creek on our property, providing an additional 3 miles of water access. Antelope Creek sub irrigates a 40 acre wild meadow area as well.

Some portions of the creeks are fenced to exclude cattle while the majority of the creek area is intentionally managed to limit grazing during growing seasons to allow for willows to grow which is important to limit runoff during high water. We have many miles of buried pipelines allowing us to have fresh water from the springs at locations up to 3 miles from the source. In the summer we are dependent on a well for stock water on just one section of the property.

From 2010 to 2013, approximately 1,000 acres were cleared of Juniper and burned. We are in the process of clearing an additional 400 acres of Junipers in 2025. There is good shelter on the rangeland in summer and winter. Trees provide shade and draws offer shelter from the elements. There are 90 pastures on the 14,000 acres with permanent fencing. These range in size from 20 acres to 1,000 acres.

Grazing is planned with winter weather, calving, gathering, branding, breeding and shipping in mind. There are adequate facilities with corrals and livestock scales for sorting, shipping and weaning. A major water system project supports many pastures as well as the corral area and provides fire protection to the buildings. Sheds exist for storing feed which we haul from town and hay is stored inside as well as in open stack areas. We always purchase some hay for weaning, emergencies and tough winters. Weaned calves can be fed in mangers allowing the cattle access to open space and covered ground until turn out in the spring, typically March 1 to April 1.

Goals for the coming year are to continue to monitor our established Grazewell sites. Ideas for improvement in the monitored areas are extending a waterline so that more intense grazing can be possible. Our Juniper removal project will allow for more water to be available for grass and forbs. Some of these areas will need to be reseeded after the trees are burned. The purpose of clearing these areas is to reestablish perennial grasses and reduce bare ground. We will need to plan for non-use for these fields for a portion of 2026. Each season and every year seem to present its own challenges, but we are motivated to continuously improve our landscape to provide for the generations to come.