



# OPERATING A PROFITABLE SMALL FARM

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FACT SHEET 21

## Basic Agricultural Glossary: Livestock and Pasture

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**Acre.** The standard unit of measurement for land area in agriculture. An acre of land is equivalent to 43,560 square feet.

**Animal Unit.** A common animal denominator based on feed consumption. It is assumed that one mature cow represents an animal unit.

**Backgrounding.** Refers to the feeding and management of slaughter animals during the period between weaning and their arrival at feeder weight.

**Barrow.** A male hog that has been castrated before reaching sexual maturity.

**Bloat.** An abnormal condition in ruminants characterized by a distension of the rumen, usually seen on the animal's upper left side, due to an accumulation of gases.

**Boar.** An uncastrated male hog.

**Bovine.** Refers to the group of animals that include beef and dairy cattle.

**Broadcast.** Refers to the method of application for seeding, fertilizer, or pesticides where the material applied is spread in a wide pattern onto the soil surface.

**Buck.** A male goat. Male goats are also sometimes referred to as "Billy goats."

**Bull.** A sexually mature, uncastrated bovine.

**Calcium (Ca).** An essential plant nutrient which can be added to the soil through the

application of liming materials. Calcium also helps to raise the pH (thus reducing acidity) of the soil.

**Cannibalism.** The habit of some animals of biting at, pecking, or eating body parts of penmates.

**Capon.** A male chicken castrated before reaching sexual maturity.

**Carrying Capacity.** Refers to the number of animals or animal units a pasture can sustain during a given grazing period.

**Carryover Nitrogen.** Refers to the nitrogen left in the soil to a current crop from a previous crop, usually a leguminous crop.

**Chisel Plow.** A soil tillage tool that consists of a series of straight steel shanks, which when pulled through the soil tills only a narrow furrow of soil. This is considered a minimum tillage practice that helps to reduce the risk of soil erosion.

**Cockerel.** A young rooster not more than a year old.

**Colt.** A male horse, or pony, four years of age or younger, that has not been castrated.

**Continuous Grazing.** Refers to a grazing system where animals are left to graze in a field for an extended period of time.

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**Conventional Tillage/Seeding.** Refers to a form of field preparation and seeding where the soil is moldboard plowed and/or disked prior to seeding.

**Cow.** A mature bovine female usually having had at least one calf.

**Creep Feeding.** The special feeding of calves during the weaning period that helps the young ruminant animals transition to a forage-based diet.

**Crop Residue.** The plant material left in the field following the harvest of a crop.

**Cull.** Refers to animals to be eliminated from the livestock operation for production, or management reasons.

**Cultipacker.** A tool used in field preparation to press or tighten up the soil following conventional tillage and harrowing of a field. The cultipacker is a grooved roller which is typically used just prior to and immediately after seeding a field.

**Dam.** The mother or female parent of an animal.

**Deferred Grazing.** Refers to the grazing strategy where forage growth is accumulated in a pasture for grazing at a later time. Tall fescue is often used as a late fall or winter deferred grazing pasture.

**Doe.** A female of the goat, deer, or rabbit family. Female goats with kids are sometimes referred to as nanny goats.

**Drill Seeder.** Refers to a type of seeder that drops seeds directly into a furrow in the soil through a tube.

**Dry Matter.** Refers to that part of a feed that is not water.

**Drying Off (Up).** The process of using certain management practices to stop milk production. Dairy cattle are usually dried off for a rest period before calving. A dry cow is not lactating.

**Endophyte (Fungus).** Refers to a type of fungus that infects a plant without causing any harm to the plant. The fungus is actually beneficial, as it causes the plant to produce a toxic substance that fends off pests. This toxic substance can be harmful to livestock. Tall fescue is the most well-known forage to be associated with an endophyte.

**Ensiled.** Refers to the storage of forage in airtight, anaerobic conditions.

**Ewe.** A female sheep.

**Farrow.** To give birth to a litter of pigs.

**Feeder.** Refers to a slaughter animal that is of sufficient age and weight to be put into a feedlot for finishing prior to slaughter.

**Fescue Toxicity.** Refers to the toxic effects to animals grazing on tall fescue infected with endophyte fungus. This affliction is also known as fescue foot.

**Filly.** A female horse or pony up to four years of age that has not foaled.

**Finishing.** Refers to the process of feeding out feeder animals in a feedlot until they reach slaughter weight.

**Flash Grazing.** Refers to the grazing strategy of heavily stocking a pasture or paddock for a very brief period, so that the forage plants can be prevented from maturing by the consumption of the top growth.

**Flushing.** The practice of feeding a higher than normal level of energy at breeding time to increase ovulation rate, especially in ewes and gilts.

**Fodder.** Most often refers to the corn stalks and leaves left in the field following grain harvest, which can be used as a coarse animal feed.

**Forage.** Vegetable matter in a fresh, dried, or ensiled state, which is fed to livestock. Forage includes pasture, greenchop, hay, haylage, and silage.

**Founder.** The inflammation in the foot of a horse, sheep, or goat. This is also known as laminitis. It can be caused by overeating grain, green forage, cold weather, severe concussion, or excessive stress.

**Freshen.** Refers to cattle giving birth (calving), thereby beginning a new lactation cycle. A fresh cow has recently calved and is actively lactating.

**Furrow.** Refers to a trench in the soil made by tillage equipment.

**Gelding.** A castrated male horse.

**Gilt.** A female hog usually less than 15 months of age that has not produced a litter.

**Grass Tetany.** A metabolic disorder of cattle and sheep grazing on lush grass pastures. It is characterized by magnesium deficiency.

**Greenchop.** Freshly cut forage that is fed directly to animals.

Harrow. Soil tillage equipment typically used to smooth out or level a field immediately after disking and prior to seeding. Field dragging equipment.

Hay. Forage harvested during the growing season and preserved for feeding at a later date by drying.

Haylage. Forage ensiled at a moisture content between 35 to 55 percent.

Heifer. A female bovine that has not given birth to a calf.

Hen. An adult female chicken or turkey.

Inoculum. Refers to the packaged bacteria used to treat legume seed prior to planting to insure that a sufficient number of nodules are formed on the legume's roots. The bacteria in these root nodules fix nitrogen for the legume plant.

Intensive Grazing. Refers to the grazing system where a pasture or paddock is heavily stocked with animals for a brief period, usually between one to six days, then the land is allowed to rest before being grazed again.

Kid. A young goat.

Lamb. A young sheep.

Legume. A broadleaf plant that has a symbiotic relationship with bacteria living in nodules on the plant's roots. The bacteria provide nitrogen in a usable form to the plant.

Liming. Refers to the addition of limestone or other basic (alkaline) material to soil to raise the pH of the soil.

Magnesium (Mg). An essential plant nutrient often found in liming materials and some other products used to amend the soil.

Mare. A female horse or pony.

Minor Elements/Micronutrients. Essential elements required for animal or plant growth, needed in small or trace amounts.

Mower Conditioner. A forage harvester, which not only cuts down the plants, but also uses a system of rollers to crush the stems to speed up the field drying process.

Nitrogen (N). An essential plant nutrient, which is expressed as the first number in a fertilizer ratio. Example: 10-6-4. Nitrogen makes up 10 percent of this fertilizer.

Nitrogen Fixation. The process where free nitrogen from the air is converted into a form that plants can use. Often this process involves *Rhizobium* sp. bacteria, which perform

this function while living in a root nodule of a legume plant.

Nodule. Refers to the node formed on the root of a legume where nitrogen-fixing bacteria live.

No Till. A system of seeding a field with little to no tillage of the soil.

Nutrient Management. Refers to the farm management practice of balancing the amount of plant nutrients applied to the soil with the nutritional requirements of the crop being produced.

Ovine. Of or relating to sheep.

Overgrazing. Refers to the poor pasture management practice of allowing animals to graze the regrowth of previously grazed plants that have not been given an adequate rest period to recover.

Paddock. A subdivided section of a pasture used to more effectively graze a larger field. A pasture can be divided up into several paddocks depending on its size and the number of animals.

Palatable Feeds. Feedstuffs that are well liked and eaten readily by animals.

Phosphorus (P). An essential plant nutrient that is expressed as the middle number in a fertilizer ratio. It is usually in the form of phosphate (P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>) in fertilizer. Example: 10-6-4. Phosphate makes up six percent of this fertilizer.

Potassium (K). An essential plant nutrient that is expressed as the last number in the fertilizer ratio. It is usually in the form of potash (K<sub>2</sub>O) in mixed fertilizers. Example: 10-6-4. Potash makes up four percent of this fertilizer.

Poult. A young turkey of either sex, usually less than two months of age.

Pullet. A female chicken less than a year old, or a young female chicken before she begins to lay.

Preconditioning. Completing one or more management practices such as dehorning, castration, vaccination for shipping fever, or training cattle to eat from a feed bunk.

Purebred. An animal having parents of the same breed, and that is eligible to be recorded with a registry association.

Ram. A male sheep that has not been castrated.

Rooster. An adult male chicken, also known as a cock.

Rumen. One of four morphologically distinct compartments that make up the complex stomach of ruminant animals. The rumen acts as a large physiological fermentation vat where microbes help to digest carbohydrates.

Shoat. A young pig of either sex that has been weaned.

Sire. The father or male parent of an animal.

Sow. Female hog usually over 15 months of age that has produced at least one litter.

Stallion. A mature male horse or pony that has not been castrated.

Steer. A male bovine castrated before reaching sexual maturity.

Tom. A male turkey.

Undergrazing. The poor pasture management practice of allowing plants in the pasture to become overmature, which reduces palatability and nutritional value. This problem typically occurs when the stocking rate in the pasture is not high enough.