

## Livestock Grazing Management & Research Activities

Beginning in November 2006, a new livestock grazing management scheme was implemented on the Santa Rita Experimental Range (Santa Rita) under the supervision of Dr. George Ruyle, School of Natural Resources and the Environment and in cooperation with Andrew McGibbon who owns the livestock. This new management replaces the “Santa Rita Grazing System” experiment that was in place since 1972 (Martin and Severson. 1988. *J. Range. Man.* 41:291-295, and Mashiri et al. 2008. *Rangeland Ecol. Manage.* 61:368-379).

The new scheme applies adaptive grazing management principles to establish expected dormant season grazing capacity based on summer forage production, and summer grazing periods of only 10 days to avoid the re-grazing of plants in the summer growing season (Noelle et al. 2021. *Frontiers in Veterinary Science*, section Animal Behavior and Welfare. 7, 1023. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fvets.2020.600734>). The adaptive management elements include 1) use of summer production values to re-adjust stocking rates each fall, 2) start and duration of the summer growing season to determine when livestock should be moved between pastures, and 3) flexible pasture use to support the variety of research projects being performed on the Santa Rita.

Currently, there are two herds moving through multiple pastures to consolidate livestock handling activities and more precisely manage grazing use. The large herd of ~400 animals will move through a combination of 21 pastures, 15 are located on the Santa Rita, and 3 on the Coronado National Forest, and 3 on Arizona State Lands. The small herd, ~80 animals, will move through 11 pastures all but two are on the Santa Rita. Brett Blum and associates are measuring forage production and utilization, livestock movement patterns, and developing methods to forecast forage availability and likelihood of re-grazing plants in the summer growing season.

Researchers, instructors, and other interested parties are advised to consult the accompanying tables and maps to learn the specific location, timing and number of livestock expected in each pasture; as well as the actual use in those areas. Be aware that 1) some animals may appear in pastures outside these expected periods because of handling problems, 2) livestock use of unintended pastures is not shown in the report below, and 3) adjustment to timing and numbers can be made to accommodate research and instruction needs.

Since November 2008, a new practice has been implemented by opening pasture gates 1-2 days before the official start date for grazing in the new pasture. Typically, the gates will open 1 day earlier, but the 2-day window will be common when there are frequent moves (every 10 days) during the summer growing season. This practice is being adopted to reduce the separation of calves from cows during the move between pastures.

## Planned Livestock Grazing on the Santa Rita Experimental Range

01 November 2023 - 31 October 2024

Below are the projected livestock grazing days for the “large herd” and “small herd” of livestock on the Santa Rita Experimental Range for the grazing year 01 November 2023 - 31 October 2024 and extended beyond October 2024 for planning purposes. Projected grazing use is based on our current best estimates of available forage and the commencement of summer rains. The projected dates and herd size may change as forage conditions change and monitoring data are analyzed.

Both large and small herd plans are followed by a figure comparing the cumulative projected and actual grazing days on the SRER throughout the grazing season. Grazing Days for a month is the sum of the number of cattle present each day for that month, and Cumulative Grazing Days is the sum of all months before and including the current month. Projected Grazing Days are based on the grazing plan starting on November 1<sup>st</sup>. Actual Grazing Days are reported monthly by the Santa Rita Ranch. Cumulative grazing days consider only pastures on the SRER. Private, Forest Service, and State pastures outside the SRER are not included.

Significant changes in the grazing schedule will be announced on the list serve [srer@list.cals.arizona.edu](mailto:srer@list.cals.arizona.edu). Assume accuracy of projected dates to increase as those dates get closer. See the Grazing Management Map (below) for spatial details. Direct questions to Brett Blum ([bcb@arizona.edu](mailto:bcb@arizona.edu)) or Mitch McClaran ([mcclaran@u.arizona.edu](mailto:mcclaran@u.arizona.edu)).

Plan Update 31 October 2024

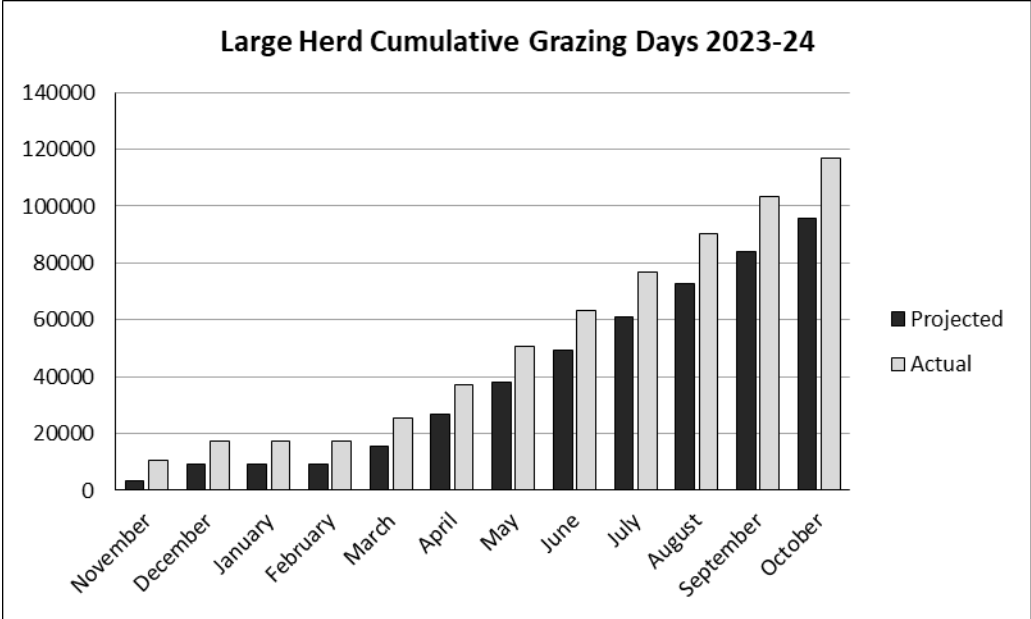
**SRER Large Herd (Herd 1 on map)**

**Plan Update:**

**31-Oct-2024**

| Year           | Pasture<br>(acres) | Projected           |            |          |      |                      | Actual              |            |          |      |                      |
|----------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------|----------|------|----------------------|---------------------|------------|----------|------|----------------------|
|                |                    | Herd Size<br>(AU's) | Start Date | End Date | Days | Animal Days per Acre | Herd Size<br>(AU's) | Start Date | End Date | Days | Animal Days per Acre |
| 2023           | 2S (1389)          |                     |            |          |      |                      | 350                 | 01-Nov     | 08-Nov   | 8    | 1.9                  |
|                | 12B (1610)         | 375                 | 22-Nov     | 01-Dec   | 10   | 2.3                  | 350                 | 18-Nov     | 05-Dec   | 18   | 3.9                  |
|                | 12E (2562)         | 375                 | 02-Dec     | 16-Dec   | 15   | 2.2                  | 350                 | 06-Dec     | 20-Dec   | 15   | 2.0                  |
| 2024           | Canoa N/S* (5513)  | 375                 | 17-Dec     | 14-Feb   | 60   | 4.1                  | 350                 | 21-Dec     | 08-Mar   | 79   | 5.0                  |
|                | State* (2778)      | 375                 | 15-Feb     | 15-Mar   | 30   | 4.0                  |                     |            |          |      |                      |
|                | 12C (1886)         | 375                 | 16-Mar     | 14-Apr   | 30   | 6.0                  | 350                 | 09-Mar     | 27-Mar   | 19   | 3.5                  |
|                | 12A (995)          | 375                 | 15-Apr     | 19-Apr   | 5    | 1.9                  | 311                 | 28-Mar     | 01-Apr   | 5    | 1.6                  |
|                | 140 Trap (209)     | 375                 | 20-Apr     | 22-Apr   | 3    | 5.4                  | 350                 | 09-Nov     | 17-Nov   | 9    | 15.1                 |
|                |                    |                     |            |          |      |                      | 153                 | 01-Apr     | 02-Apr   | 2    | 1.5                  |
|                | 3 (4104)           | 375                 | 23-Apr     | 12-May   | 20   | 1.8                  | 416                 | 17-Apr     | 16-May   | 30   | 3.0                  |
|                | 5S (4699)          | 375                 | 13-May     | 11-Jun   | 30   | 2.4                  | 404                 | 16-May     | 24-Jun   | 40   | 3.4                  |
|                | 5M (3448)          | 375                 | 12-Jun     | 26-Jun   | 15   | 1.6                  | 396                 | 21-Jun     | 08-Jul   | 18   | 2.1                  |
|                | 5N (2025)          | 375                 | 27-Jun     | 20-Jul   | 24   | 4.4                  | 433                 | 09-Jul     | 05-Aug   | 28   | 6.0                  |
|                | 15 (4217)          | 375                 | 21-Jul     | 30-Jul   | 10   | 0.9                  | 390                 | 06-Aug     | 03-Sep   | 29   | 2.7                  |
|                | 6D (1978)          | 375                 | 31-Jul     | 19-Aug   | 20   | 3.8                  | 409                 | 31-Aug     | 28-Sep   | 29   | 6.0                  |
|                | 6B (1677)          | 375                 | 20-Aug     | 29-Aug   | 10   | 2.2                  | 196                 | 28-Sep     | 31-Oct   | 34   | 4.0                  |
|                | 6A (2686)          | 375                 | 30-Aug     | 18-Sep   | 20   | 2.8                  | 374                 | 19-Oct     | 31-Oct   | 13   | 1.8                  |
|                | 6E (910)           | 375                 | 19-Sep     | 28-Sep   | 10   | 4.1                  |                     |            |          |      |                      |
|                | 2N (4585)          | 375                 | 29-Sep     | 07-Nov   | 40   | 3.3                  |                     |            |          |      |                      |
|                | 2S (1389)          | 375                 | 08-Nov     | 27-Nov   | 20   | 5.4                  | 323                 | 09-Apr     | 16-Apr   | 8    | 1.9                  |
| 140 Trap (209) | 375                | 28-Nov              | 30-Nov     | 3        | 5.4  |                      |                     |            |          |      |                      |
| 12A (995)      | 375                | 01-Dec              | 05-Dec     | 5        | 1.9  |                      |                     |            |          |      |                      |
| 12B (1610)     | 375                | 06-Dec              | 15-Dec     | 10       | 2.3  |                      |                     |            |          |      |                      |

\* These pastures are not part of the Santa Rita Experimental Range; and Canoa pastures not yet split.



**Comparison of Projected and Actual Cumulative Grazing Days for the Large Herd in 2023-24.** In this grazing year, cattle were Projected to be on the Santa Rita pastures for 255 days, and through October 2024, they have been on for 287 days.

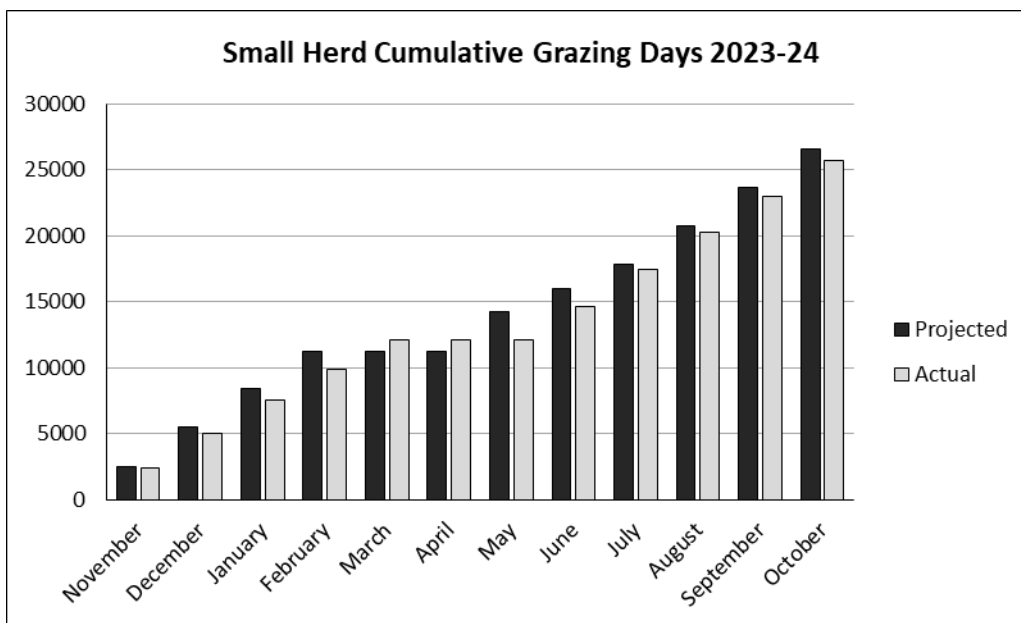
**SRER Small Herd (Herd 2 on map)**

**Plan Update:**

**31-Oct-2024**

| Year | Pasture (acres)   | Projected        |            |          |      |                      | Actual           |            |          |      |                      |
|------|-------------------|------------------|------------|----------|------|----------------------|------------------|------------|----------|------|----------------------|
|      |                   | Herd Size (AU's) | Start Date | End Date | Days | Animal Days per Acre | Herd Size (AU's) | Start Date | End Date | Days | Animal Days per Acre |
| 2023 | UA-E (156)        |                  |            |          |      |                      | 82               | 01-Nov     | 02-Nov   | 2    | 1.1                  |
|      | UA-F (336)        |                  |            |          |      |                      | 82               | 03-Nov     | 13-Nov   | 11   | 2.7                  |
|      | 1 (782)           | 95               | 24-Nov     | 02-Jan   | 40   | 4.9                  | 82               | 14-Nov     | 31-Jan   | 79   | 8.3                  |
| 2024 | 8 (815)           | 95               | 03-Jan     | 16-Feb   | 45   | 5.2                  | 82               | 01-Feb     | 13-Mar   | 42   | 4.2                  |
|      | 11C (214)         | 95               | 17-Feb     | 01-Mar   | 14   | 6.2                  | 90               | 14-Mar     | 26-Mar   | 13   | 5.5                  |
|      | FS Ranger Pasture | 95               | 02-Mar     | 30-Apr   | 60   |                      |                  |            |          |      |                      |
|      | 4 (670)           | 95               | 01-May     | 19-Jun   | 50   | 7.1                  | 90               | 03-Jun     | 12-Jul   | 40   | 5.4                  |
|      | Private Pasture   | 95               | 20-Jun     | 12-Jul   | 23   |                      | 90               | 27-Mar     | 02-Jun   | 68   |                      |
|      | 11B (212)         | 95               | 13-Jul     | 26-Jul   | 14   | 6.3                  | 90               | 13-Jul     | 21-Jul   | 9    | 3.8                  |
|      | UA-A (549)        | 95               | 27-Jul     | 08-Aug   | 13   | 2.2                  | 90               | 22-Jul     | 04-Aug   | 14   | 2.3                  |
|      | UA-C (365)        | 95               | 09-Aug     | 28-Aug   | 20   | 5.2                  | 90               | 05-Aug     | 28-Aug   | 24   | 5.9                  |
|      | UA-H (453)        | 95               | 29-Aug     | 17-Sep   | 20   | 4.2                  | 90               | 29-Aug     | 16-Sep   | 19   | 3.8                  |
|      | UA-G (441)        | 95               | 18-Sep     | 07-Oct   | 20   | 4.3                  | 90               | 20-Oct     | 31-Oct   | 12   | 2.4                  |
|      | UA-D (357)        | 95               | 08-Oct     | 27-Oct   | 20   | 5.3                  | 90               | 17-Sep     | 30-Sep   | 14   | 3.5                  |
|      | UA-E (156)        | 95               | 28-Oct     | 04-Nov   | 8    | 4.9                  | 90               | 01-Oct     | 19-Oct   | 19   | 11.0                 |
|      | UA-F (336)        | 95               | 05-Nov     | 24-Nov   | 20   | 5.7                  |                  |            |          |      |                      |

\*These pastures are not part of the Santa Rita Experimental Range. Forest Service Pastures include Ranger and Florida pastures.



**Comparison of Projected and Actual Cumulative Grazing Days for the Small Herd in 2023-24.** In this grazing year, cattle were Projected to be on the Santa Rita pastures for 283 days, and through October 2024, they have been on for 298 days.



