

# Pasture Bare Spots

## Strategies & Solutions

**Jerry Martin, Senior Extension Associate, Penn State Crop & Soil Sciences**  
**771-783-9704      [jmartin@psu.edu](mailto:jmartin@psu.edu)**

# “Pastures” & “Bare Spots” Defined

## ❖ Pastures vs. Lots

- Focus is not on lots
  - Barnyards, feed lots, exercise lots, loafing areas, etc.
  - Planned areas designed (fence) and intended (purpose) to be unvegetated
- Focus is on pastures
  - Originally vegetated
  - Primary intent for these areas is to be vegetated
  - Purpose may or may not be feed value

## ❖ Bare Spots

- All areas in pastures that are void of vegetation
  - Large, small, and “micro”
  - Permanent and temporary (short-termed; seasonal)
  - Planned and unplanned
- Result of animal activity

# Educational Purpose

## ❖ Outfit you with:

- Give you a pair of eye glasses
  - Help you look at things from a water quality view
- Give you a thinking cap
- Give you an umbrella and...
- Invite you to take a walk in the rain



## ❖ Help you see that there are many “simple” options to correct and minimize “brown areas”

- Simple doesn't mean easy
- Will require effort and MANAGEMENT



## ❖ Provoke you to become aggressively proactive

# Bare Spots Happen!

- ❖ Reality of having animals on pasture







# Bare Spots Are Planned!

- ❖ Bare spots happen on purpose
  - Intent is not to create bare spots
- ❖ Other purposes and intents
  - A secondary outcome are bare spots
- ❖ Combination of human and animal objectives







# Things to Consider

- ❖ Animal congregation areas
  - In contrast to animal traffic areas
  - Key consideration
    - Manure accumulation
- ❖ Environmentally sensitive areas
  - Streams and ponds
  - Sinkholes
  - Rock outcroppings
  - Wet areas (high water table)
- ❖ Storms and stormwater
- ❖ Connections
  - Congregation areas and sensitive areas

# Understanding Stormwater

- ❖ Do you know what happens to water during a storm on your farm?
- ❖ Key things to understand, consider and evaluate
  - Stormwater flow
    - Where does stormwater come from?
    - What does stormwater flow through?
    - Where does stormwater go?
  - Types of water flow
    - Concentrated Flow
    - Sheet Flow
  - Storm magnitude
    - Should consider a 25-year, 24-hour storm
    - Do you what size of storm that is for your farm?
      - ❑ Dauphin County – 5.6 inches
      - ❑ Lancaster County – 6.0 inches



















# Understanding Sensitive Areas

## ❖ Streams and ponds

- Receives storm runoff water
- Near stream areas are very critical!
  - Within 150'
  - Increase potential of nutrients reaching the stream

## ❖ Sinkholes

- Direct conduit to groundwater

## ❖ Rock outcroppings

- Limestone bedrock
- Direct conduit to groundwater

## ❖ Wet areas

- High water table
- Leaching of nutrients



# 4 Guidelines

❖ Eliminate

❖ Locate

❖ Rotate

❖ Vegetate

# 4 Guidelines

## ❖ Eliminate

- Feed, water, shade areas unless absolutely necessary
- Use fence to keep out of sensitive areas
  - Streams, ponds, marshy areas, trees, etc.
- Remove trees
- Remove accumulated manure frequently
  - No less than once a year

## ❖ Locate

- Not within 150' of streams and ponds
- Where there is no or little clean upslope water entering the area
- Where runoff is treated
  - Does not concentrate and moves through a lot of vegetation

# 4 Guidelines

## ❖ Rotate

- Move feeders, waterers, and gates to different locations yearly or throughout the grazing season
- Divide pasture into paddocks and rotate through paddocks

## ❖ Vegetate

- Reseed to establish vegetation on bare areas
- Maintain dense vegetation over the entire pasture
- Practice intensive grazing principles and practices



















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**Questions**