Pasture Bare Spots

Strategies & Solutions

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"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

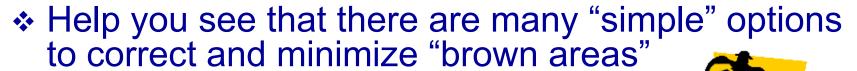
Bare Spots

- 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



- 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













