

Long Live our Grazing Lands

Restoring our damaged grazing lands before they disappear forever.



Today, we stand poised at the forefront of a growing call to restore U.S. grazing lands.

On average, the United States loses 2 million acres of grasslands each year.¹ At this rate, our grazing lands – and the economic and ecological benefits they supply – will be lost within three generations.

Thirty-nine percent of all U.S. land is dedicated to agriculture. Nearly three-quarters of that land, 654 million acres, is used primarily for grazing livestock.² Alarming, much of the nation’s grazing lands are degraded. For multiple generations, the agriculture and food industry prioritized producing more goods in less time. This allows for cheaper food for consumers, but degraded soil and grazing lands through the continuous grazing of livestock and a dependency on fertilizer and pesticides to spur soil and plant productivity. Consequently, these lands have become fragile, less productive and less resilient to increasingly frequent severe weather events.



Further, poor financial returns, retiring generations, urban sprawl and other factors are combining to remove ranching families from grazing lands, leaving both ranchers and the land vulnerable. If we continue to allow our grazing lands to degrade, the benefits they provide, both ecological and economic, will be permanently lost.

Protecting our grasslands — the cornerstone for our grazing lands — ensures a foundation for our domestic food system, supports a cleaner environment, provides a natural carbon sink and enshrines ample space to recreate, observe wildlife and enjoy natural beauty. By prioritizing the conservation and restoration of our grasslands, we have the potential to reverse environmental damage and rejuvenate the economic viability of ranching across the United States.

¹ <https://www.mapforgrasslands.org/>

² <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=109970>



Our Purpose and Mission

The purpose of Noble Research Institute is to save our nation's grazing lands by promoting land stewardship through management, building soil health and keeping farmers and ranchers on the land. We achieve this purpose through a narrow mission: to guide farmers and ranchers in applying regenerative principles that yield healthier soil, more productive grazing land, and business success.

Noble Research Institute is the nation's largest nonprofit dedicated to farm and ranch management and has been a leading, trusted resource in agriculture since 1945. The organization serves agricultural producers with education, research and consultation on regenerating soil health to improve their land, livestock and livelihood. Demonstrating its ongoing commitment to restoring U.S. grazing lands, Noble actively manages 13,500 acres of working ranchlands to provide real-world insights and applications for farmers and ranchers.



Healthy Grazing Lands Benefit Everyone

The impact of restoring grazing lands extends far beyond the fenceposts of farms and ranches. Working together to save and regenerate U.S. grazing lands:



1. **Ensures a foundation for our domestic food system**

By nurturing healthy soils, diverse ecosystems and economic viability, we support the long-term continuation of agricultural operations. As land management with focus on soil health becomes more intentional and ecological cycles are restored, producers benefit from reduced input costs by minimizing the need for synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Farmers and ranchers can reinvest in their operations and improve their financial resilience, supporting the long-term viability of their enterprises.



2. Supports a cleaner environment

Through sustained use of intentional management practices such as limiting tilling, adaptive grazing, adequate pasture rest periods and ensuring soil coverage, farmers and ranchers significantly reduce the need for synthetic chemicals and pesticides without compromising plant or livestock productivity. The byproducts of intentional management – extensive root systems from healthy, diverse plant cover and soils rich in organic matter – minimize water runoff and erosion. Healthy grazing lands hold on to more water and act as a filter, helping to protect local groundwater aquifers and watersheds from nutrient and sediment pollution.



3. Provides a natural carbon sink

Intentional grazing land management creates healthier soils that absorb and retain atmospheric carbon. Untilled grasslands can hold more than twice as much carbon as nearby plowed cropland.³ Grassland soils store about 10% of the global soil carbon stocks, which is nearly 50% more than is stored in forests worldwide.⁴

Storing carbon in grazing lands involves harnessing solar energy through photosynthesis, using grazeable forages to capture carbon, and leveraging animals and the soil microbiome to stimulate carbon transfer below ground. Reducing reliance on synthetic inputs and removing harmful practices enables the system to capture and store carbon effectively, transforming farms and ranches into significant carbon sinks. Strategic use of cover crops and perennial vegetation protects soil, drawing in and storing carbon and enhancing soil health and the atmosphere.



4. Provides ample space for wildlife and recreation

Intentional grazing practices that afford proper rest and recovery lead to the emergence of a greater variety of grazing vegetation. Creating a more biodiverse vegetation buffet plays a pivotal role in a thriving ecosystem for wildlife, from beneficial insects to aquatic life to a diversity of animals, including desirable game species. Grazing lands that offer premium wildlife habitat open the door to economic opportunities for farmers and ranchers as well as recreation opportunities for all Americans.

³ <https://www.fs.usda.gov/ccrc/topics/grassland-carbon-management>

⁴ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S2352009421001243>

Noble as a Guide



Since its founding, Noble Research Institute works with farmers and ranchers as they steward our nation’s grazing lands and provide food and fiber for families — their own and those beyond the farm gate. Noble acknowledges that those closest to the land — farmers, ranchers and all land stewards — are the greatest guardians of soil health and have the ability to grow food in a way that nourishes both people and the environment.

Every research project, educational program and plan of action Noble takes is designed to build and sharpen a rancher’s knowledge, understanding and confidence in applying intentional management practices. We guide ranchers when they need help and celebrate with them when they find success. Our research answers critical producer-guided questions regarding soil management, grazing, economics and business operations. Our educational and consultation programs are rooted in equipping farmers and ranchers to effectively manage their operations using the six soil health principles for regenerative farms and ranches.

SOIL HEALTH PRINCIPLES

- 1**
KNOW YOUR CONTEXT
- 2**
COVER THE SOIL
- 3**
MINIMIZE SOIL DISTURBANCE
- 4**
INCREASE DIVERSITY
- 5**
MAINTAIN CONTINUOUS LIVING PLANTS/ROOTS
- 6**
INTEGRATE LIVESTOCK

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² <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=109970>

Together, We Can Revive our Nation's Grazing Lands



We know how to protect and rebuild vulnerable grasslands.

Farmers and ranchers are at the center of stewarding our nation's grasslands and connected watersheds. At Noble, we have the vision and educational resources to equip farmers and ranchers to take back the health of their land and sustain a better future for grazing lands.

Your generosity fuels our mission to empower farmers and ranchers, guiding them toward intentional management practices that revitalize our grazing lands. Each step we take is a testament to the profound impact of your support, as we work hand in hand to shape a future where agriculture thrives in harmony with nature.

Together, we can embark on a journey of transformation, one acre at a time, knowing that the impact of our efforts extends far beyond the fence line.