

BMP: Improved Pasture and Forage Quality (301)

The intent of this BMP category is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase soil carbon and improve animal performance. Improving pasture productivity and forage quality serves to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in several ways:

- Improved management of forage lands can increase the rate of carbon sequestration, where carbon dioxide (CO²) is removed from the atmosphere and stored in the soil.
- Reduced nitrogen fertilizer application rates on perennial forages that contain legume species will reduce the production of nitrous oxide (N₂O).
- Improved forage quality enables cattle to digest feed more efficiently, resulting in reduced enteric methane production and improved animal performance.

The benefits of improved pasture and forage quality include:

- improved productivity and economic gains
- higher carrying capacity of pastures
- improved soil and water quality
- improved water holding capacity of soils
- reduced greenhouse gas emissions
- enhanced soil carbon sequestration as a result of improved pasture productivity

Cost share ratio and funding cap

There is a cost share ratio of 25 per cent government, 75 per cent applicant. This BMP has a funding cap of \$10,000.

Eligible costs

- improving pasture and forage quality (to reduce enteric methane emissions and increase soil carbon)
- increasing perennial legume prevalence in pastures to improve forage quality and pasture productivity
- increasing forage species diversity in pastures to improve forage quality and pasture productivity
- enhancing grazing management to improve pasture productivity and quality
- perennial forage establishment for improved pasture quality: seed, weed control, equipment use and labour costs
- permanent or alternative fencing to improve grazing strategies: fencing material and labour costs
- alternative watering systems: system components, labour, installation
- personal labour (\$25 per hour) and personal equipment use (at set program rates)

Ineligible costs

- perimeter fencing for riparian grazing management (possibly eligible under Managing Livestock Access to Riparian Areas)

BMP specific questions

You will be asked to answer the following questions as part of your application.

- What are the current barriers you face to improving forage quality?
- What grazing and/or feed management practices will be implemented to improve your forage and pasture quality and/or productivity?
- How do you expect carrying capacity of your grazing land to change as a result of this project?
- Include a pasture diagram that includes all relevant features. This may include:
 - perimeter fences
 - cross fences
 - paddocks
 - watering sites
 - trees or bush areas
 - surface waters (e.g., creeks, rivers, lakes, ponds, wetlands)

Reference materials

For more guidance in developing your application, visit:

Manitoba Agriculture

- **Pasture Management**
- **Forage Production and Management**
- **Livestock Production**
- Field Crop Production Guide (2001 edition) - Forage Establishment (pp. 78-83) (copies may be available through Manitoba Agriculture offices)

Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association

- **Pasture Rejuvenation Methods**
- **Pasture Planner: A guide for developing your grazing system**

Manitoba Beef and Forage Initiatives

- **Planned Grazing Demonstration**
- **Rotational Grazing to Improve Pasture Productivity**
- **Low Cost Methods to Improve Pasture Production**
- **Alberta Forage Manual**