

Grazing Opportunities

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Grazing Opportunities

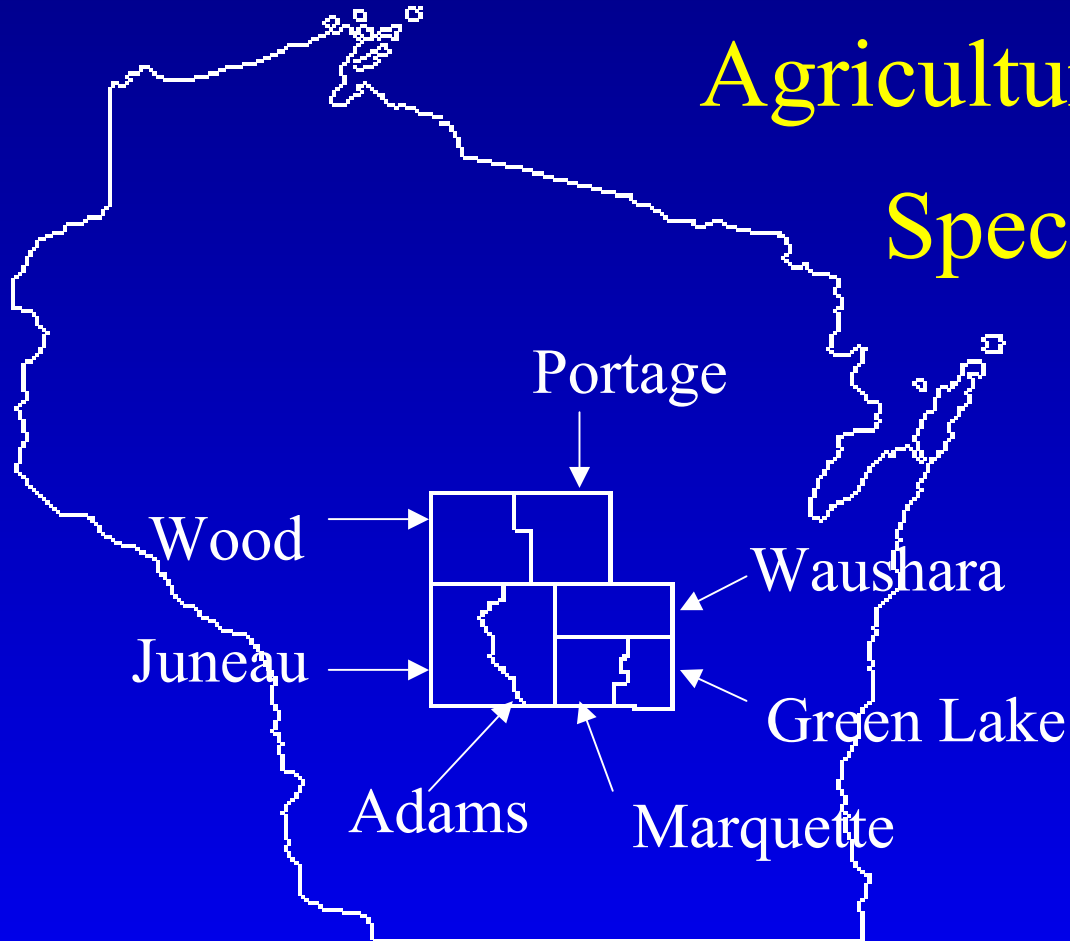


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Central Wisconsin

Agricultural

Specialization



Grazing Quotes

- Management is the single most important factor determining financial success on all farms
- Grazing won't turn a poor manager into a good one
- Grazing isn't about cows & grass it's about a different type of thinking
- Grazing isn't a goal it's a Tool

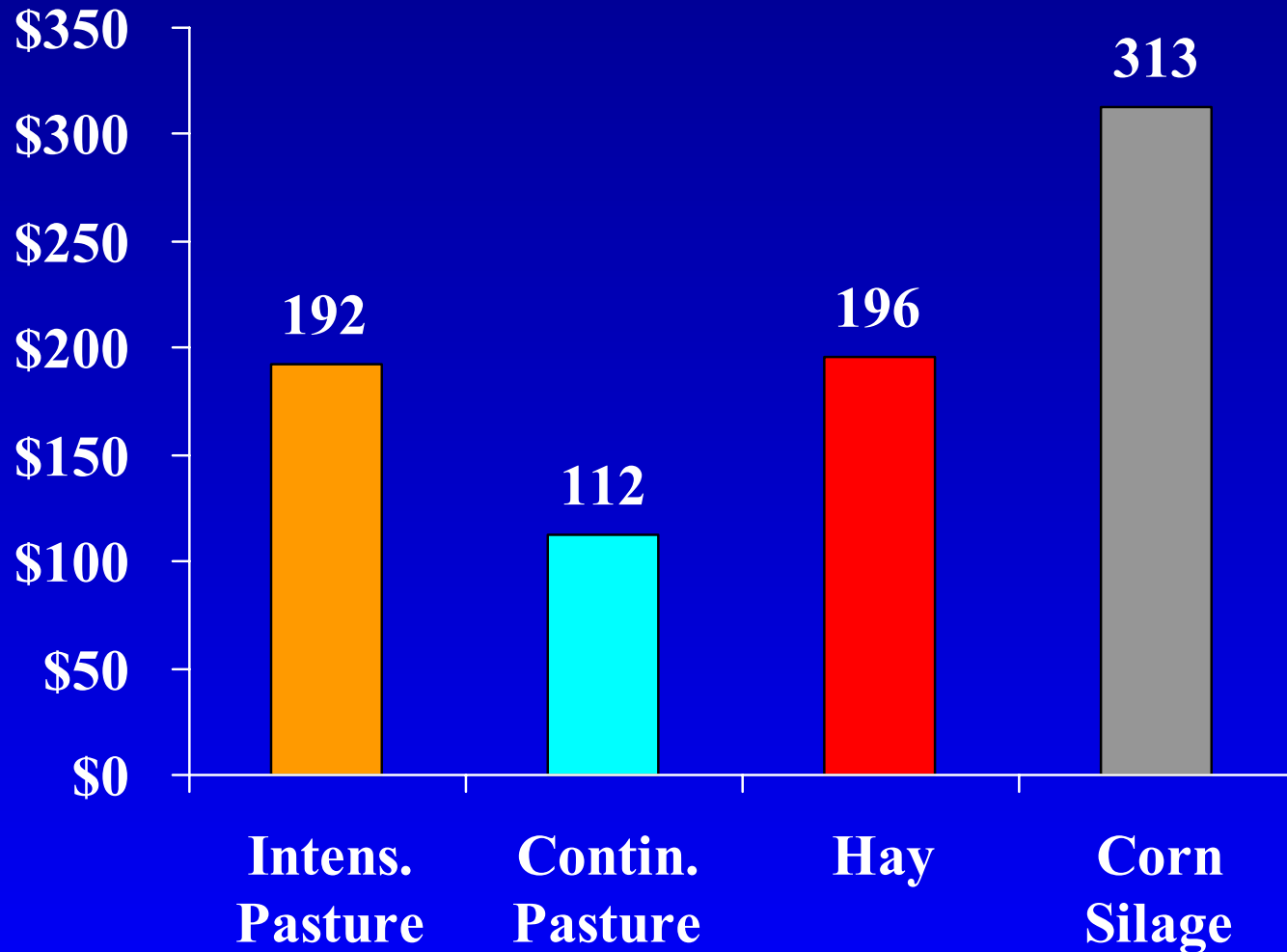
What Grazing Management and Golf have in common

- It's something you do outdoors
- Doing it well is more difficult than it looks
- Many people “talk” a much better game than they play
- Studying about how to do it can be helpful, but real success requires practice and experience

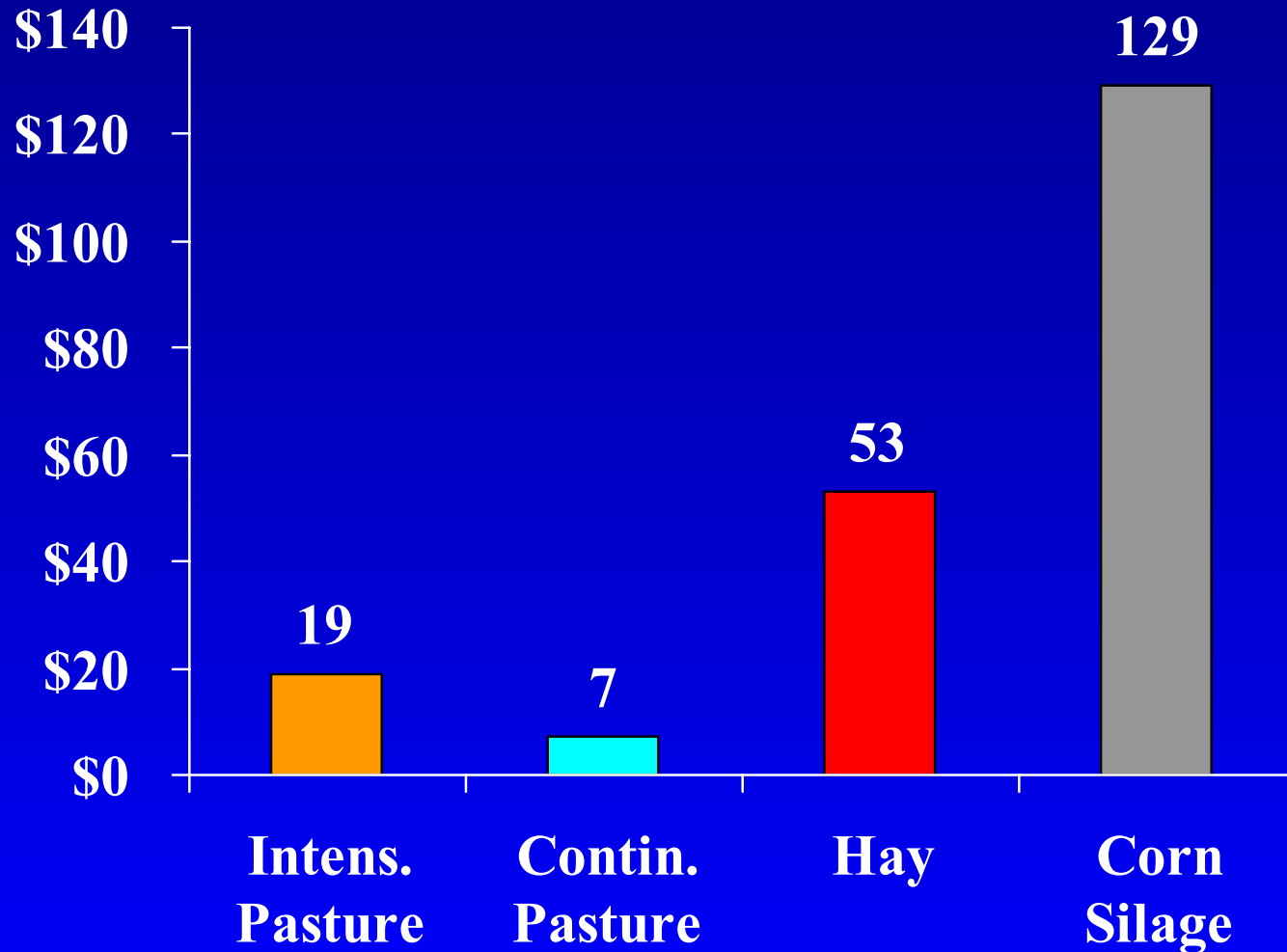
What Grazing Management and Golf have in common

- Weather can have a huge influence on the results obtained
- There are many products you can buy to better your game, but a real expert only needs a few basics
- No matter how good you are, there is always room for improvement

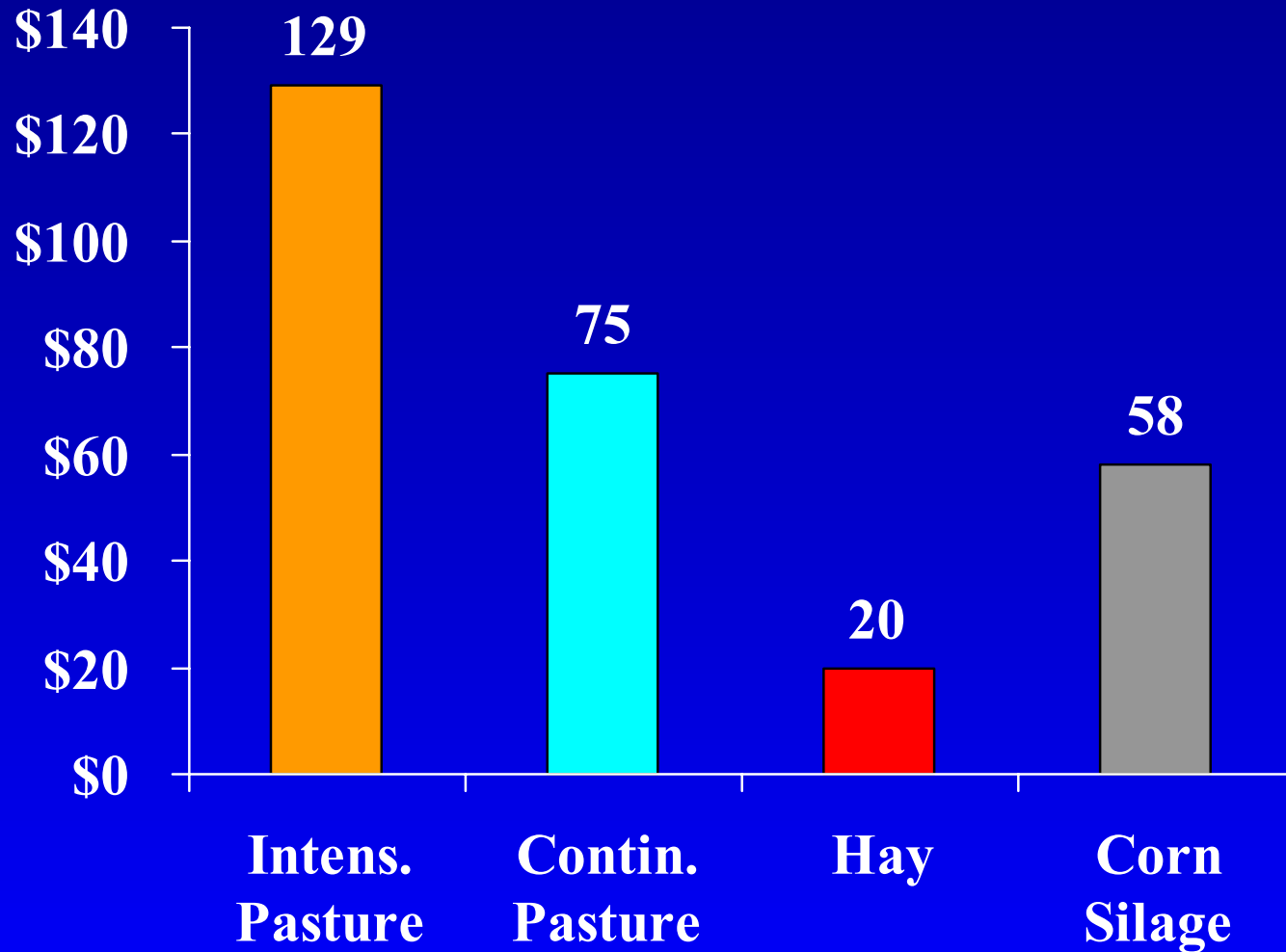
Gross Returns Per Acre



Direct Costs Per Acre



Profit Per Acre



Dairy Economic Comparison

(15,000 vs. **18,000** lbs/cow/yr)

	Confinement	Grazing	
		Full Machinery	Reduced Machinery
Return To Labor	36,528 52,118	39,409 54,997	43,640 54,227
Return To Labor (\$/hr)	6.40 8.95	7.07 9.66	8.08 10.73

* Researchers caution that this study is based on simulated dairy models

Livestock Enterprise Comparison

Enterprise	Stocking Rate	Lbs product per acre	Gross per acre
Cow-calf-low intensity	5 acres	100 calf	\$60
Cow-calf-intensive	2 acres	250 calf	\$150
Stocker calf-low intensity	1 acre	270 gain	\$95
Stocker calf-intensive	0.5 acre	540 gain	\$189
Sheep-low intensity	0.5 acre	225 lamb	\$113
Sheep-high intensity	0.2 acre	560 lamb	\$280

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Grazing Formula

Sunlight + Rain + Green Plants = Plant Growth

Plant Growth + Grazing Animals = \$\$\$

The Grazing formula involves:

- What's best for the grass
- What's best for the livestock
- What moves you toward your goals!!!

Traditional Pastures are often “Continuously Grazed”

This usually means:

- Lower yields
- Serious weed pressure
- Erosion problems
- General “poor” management

In Rotational Grazing...

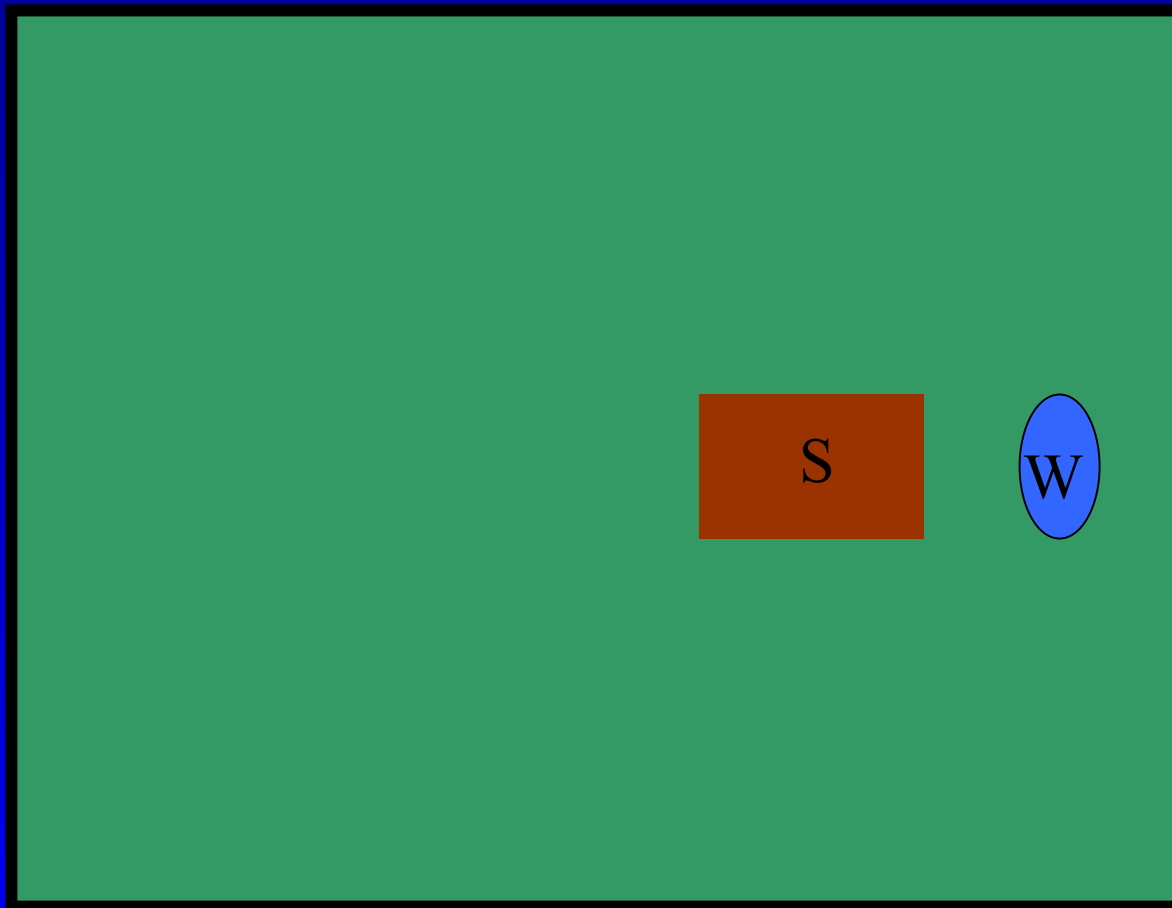
- Pastures are subdivided into smaller areas (or paddocks)
- A portion of the pasture is grazed while the remainder “Rests”
- Paddocks are allowed to:
 - Renew energy reserves
 - Rebuild plant vigor
 - Improve long-term production

Intensive Rotational Grazing...

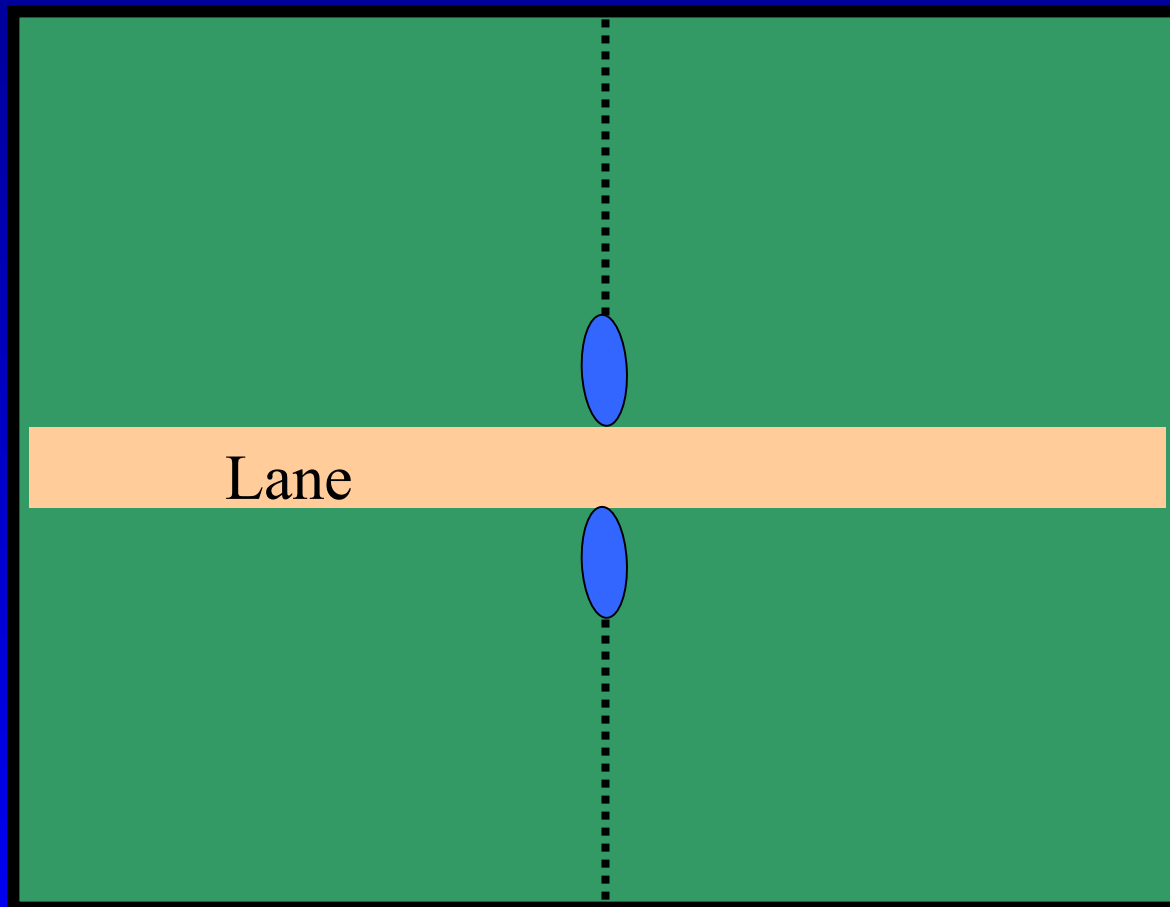
Involves a higher level of management

- Greater paddock numbers
- Shorter grazing periods
- Longer rest periods

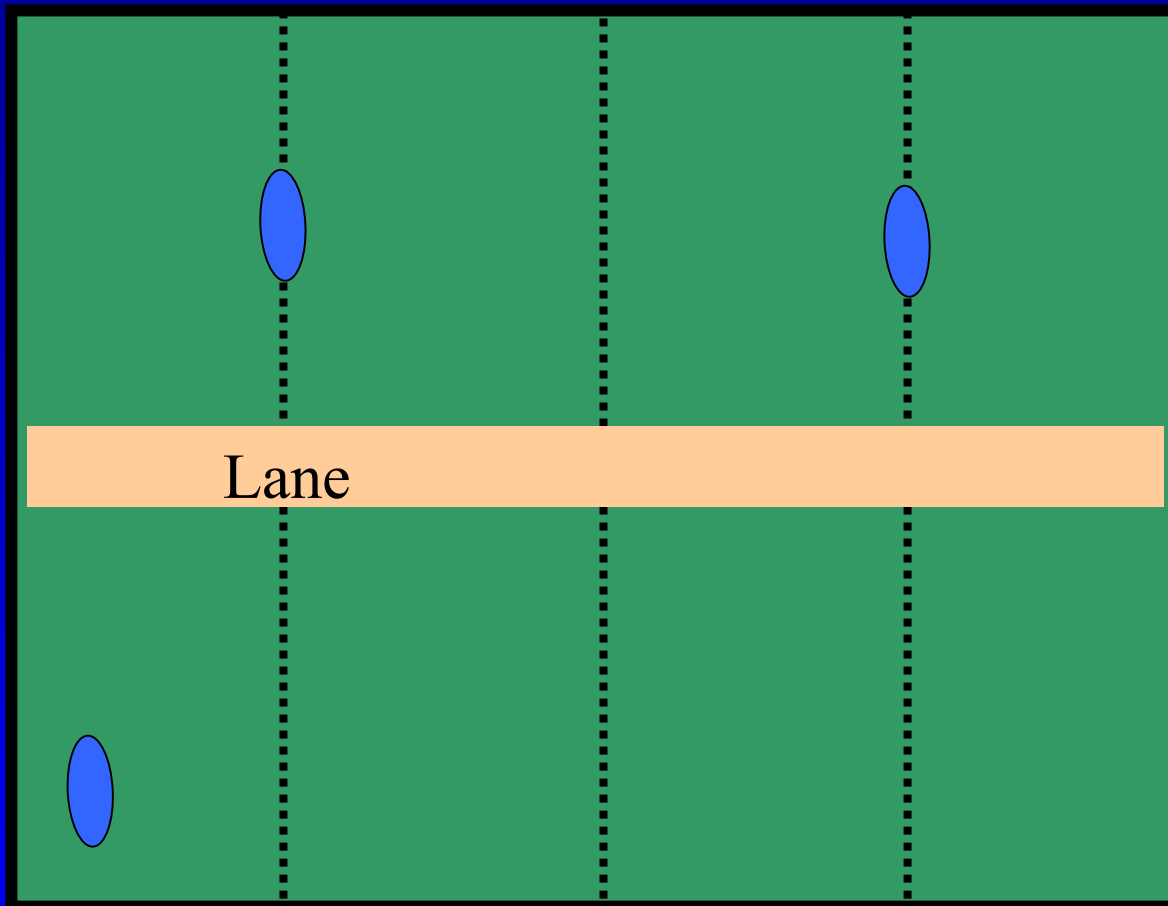
Traditional Pasture



Rotational Grazed Paddocks



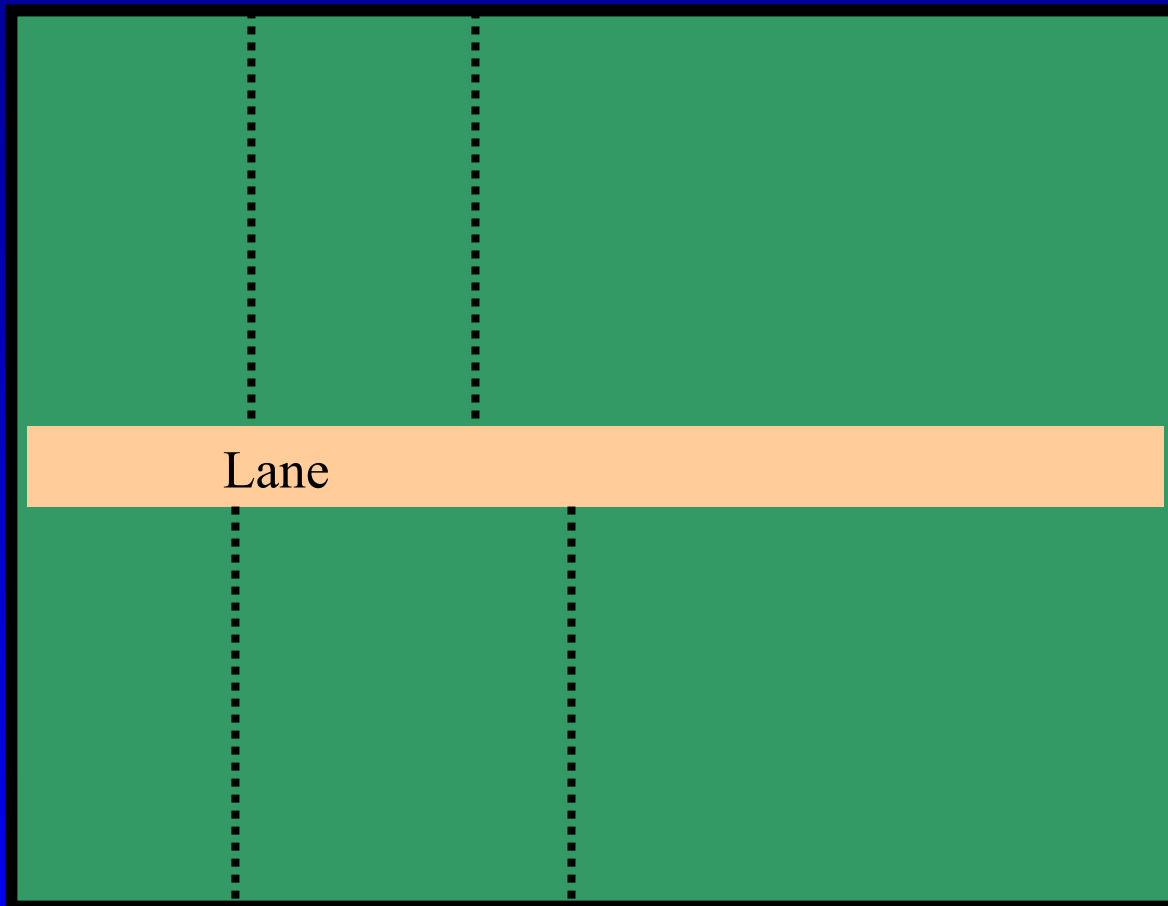
Intensive Rotational Grazing



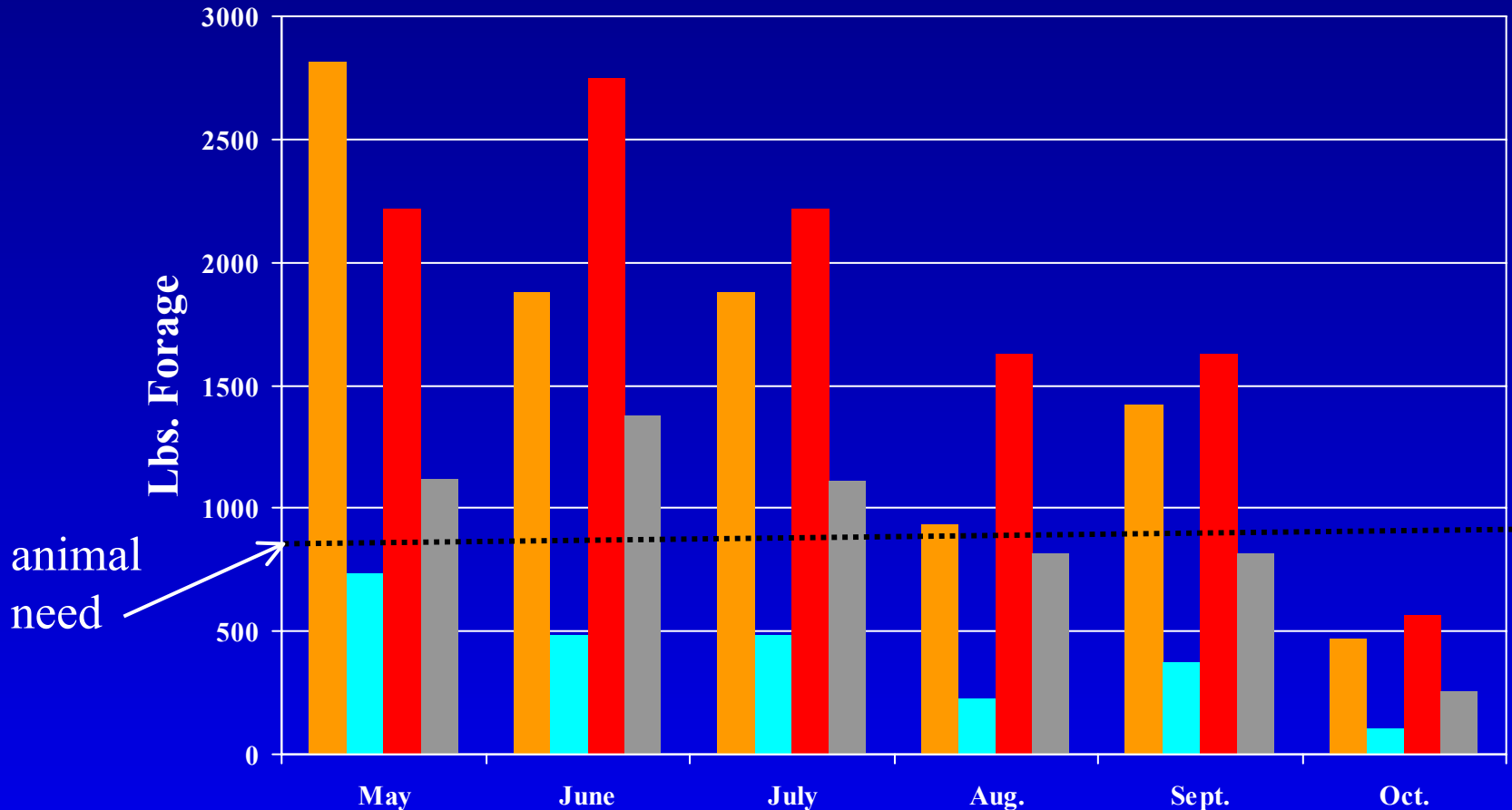
Strip Grazing



Strip Grazing



Monthly forage production in 2-acre grass and grass-legume pastures



Grass Pasture →

Good Management

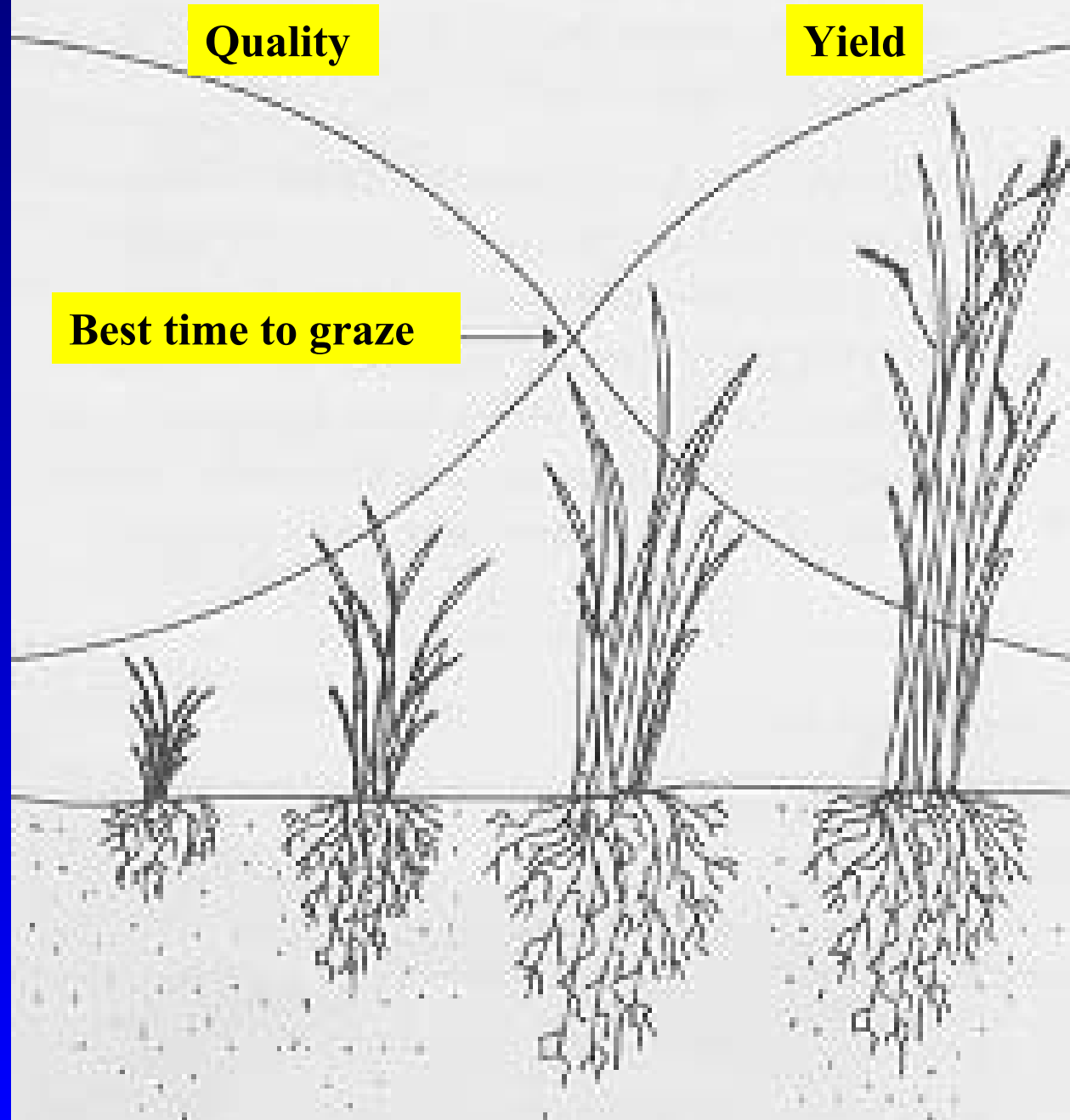
Poor Management

Grass-Legume Pasture →

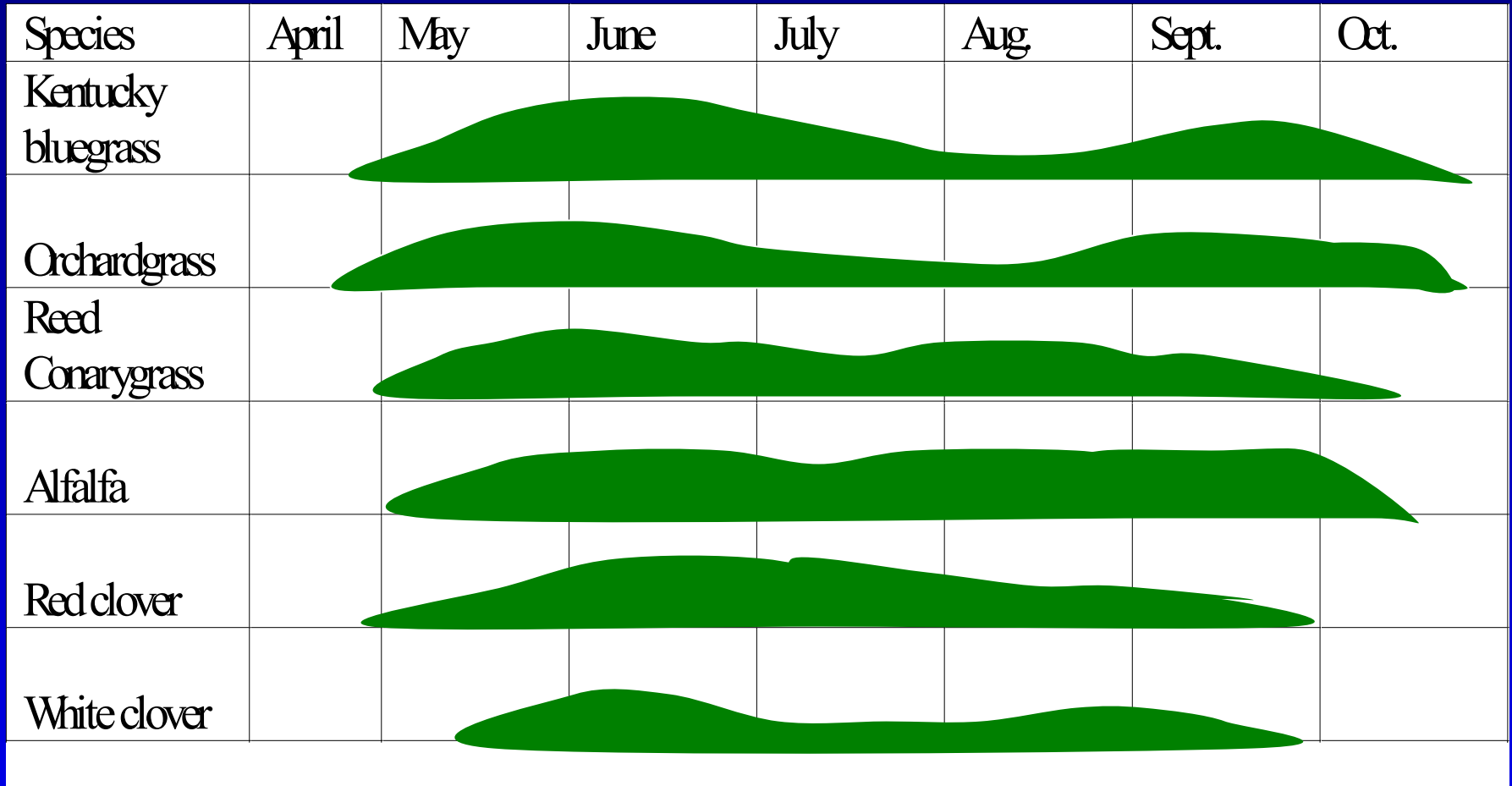
Good Management

Poor Management

Forage Growth Curve



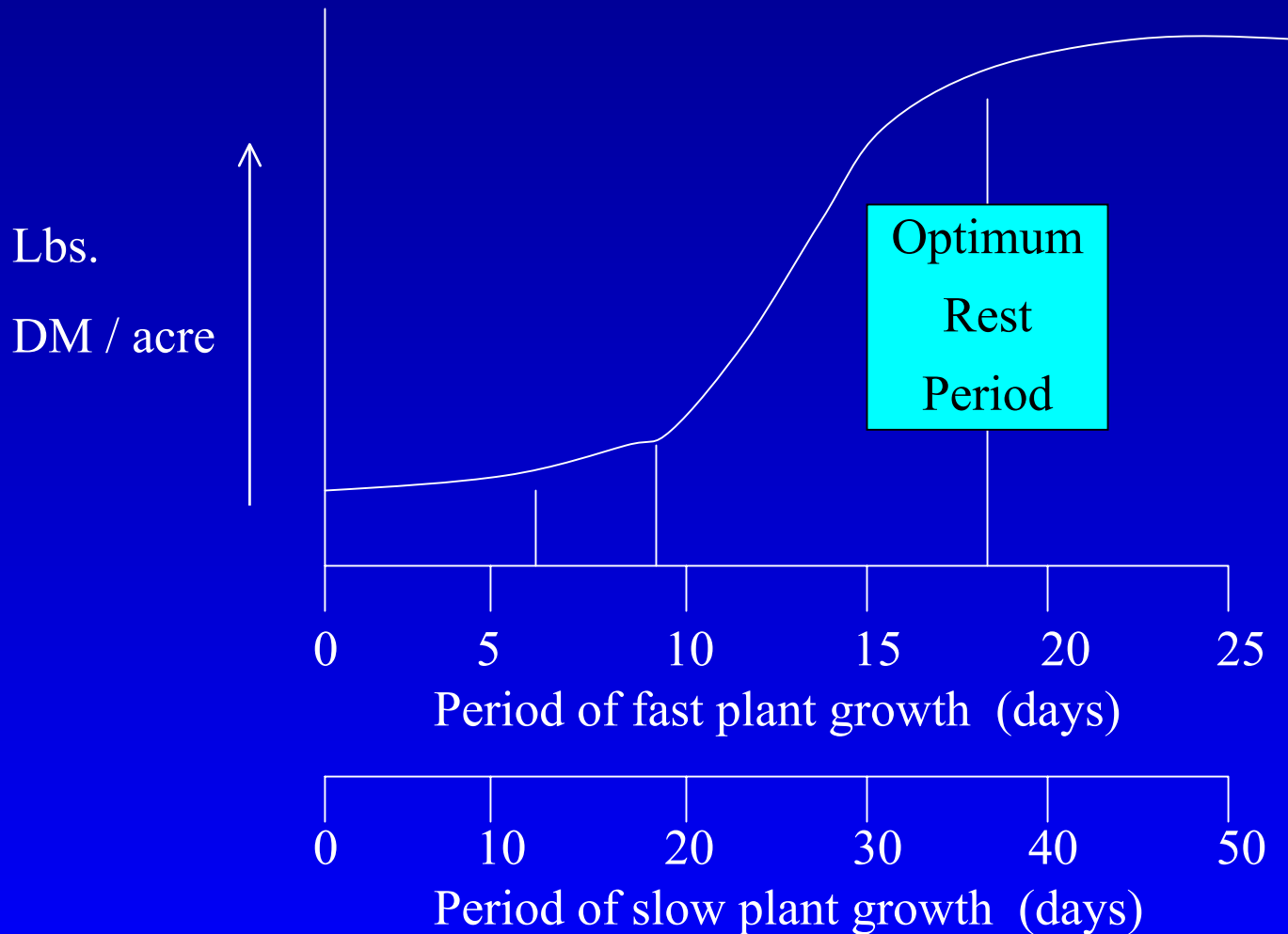
Seasonal growth patterns in forages



The Rest Period

- Should vary according to plant growth
- In general, must increase as growth rate slows
- Relates closely to seasonal forage growth
- Need to rotate between paddocks every 3-6 days

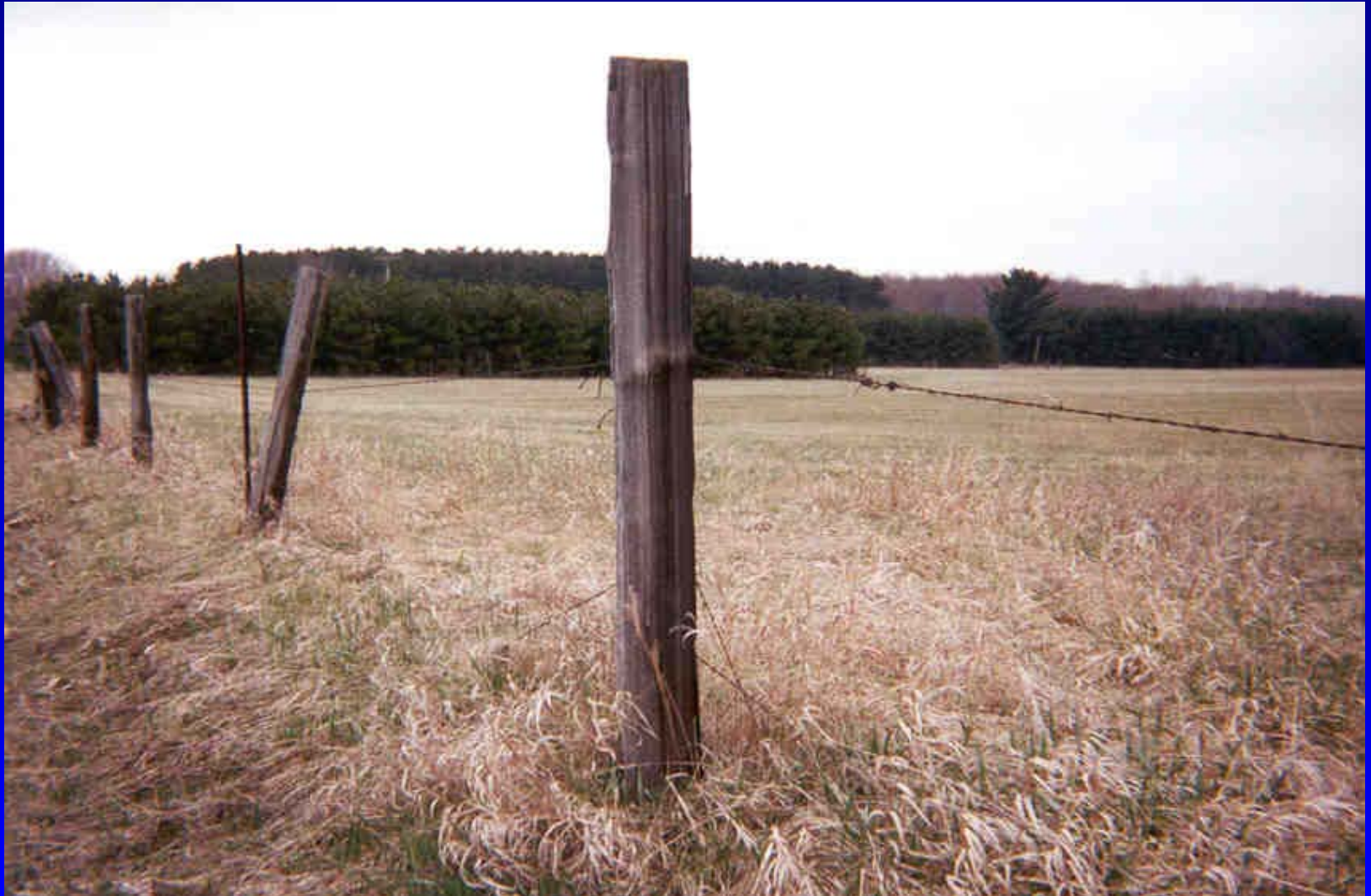
Relationship of rest period to pasture mass during periods of rapid vs. slow growth



Stocking Rate (animals/acre)

- Can use formulas for actual numbers
- Thumb rule; 1000 pound animal per 2-4 acres
- Intensive Rotational Grazing = 1000 pound beef animal to 1-1.5 acres
- Traditional “Under-managed” pastures = 1000 pound animal to 5-10 acres

Fencing



Consider the New Fencing Technology



Useful Life of Fencing Materials

<u>Material</u>	<u>Life (yrs.)</u>	<u>Maintenance</u>
Wood	15-20+	High
Post and Rail	15-20	Low – Medium
V-Mesh wire	20-30	Low
Barbless wire	15	Medium
High tensile wire	20-30	Low
Plastic fence	12	Low
PVC	20-30	Low

Grazing Streamside Pastures

Unrestricted livestock access to waters of the state that prevents the maintenance of sod cover

Cattle & Pasture

- Energy and protein supplements are unnecessary
- Provide free choice salt & minerals
- Be careful not to let cows and heifers get too fat. Fat cows will have problems at breeding time, fat heifers will produce less milk as cows

Stretching the Grazing Season

Stockpile Forages

- Let forage accumulate 70-75 days before a normal killing frost
- At 2 acres per cow expect 40-60 days of stockpiled forage
- The goal should be to provide the greatest amount of leaf material
- Growing or Lactating animals may need more

Stretching the Grazing Season

Utilize Cornstalks

- 2-2 ½ acres per cow should get you 40-75 grazing days
- Weather will affect grazing conditions
- Cornstalks grazed directly after harvest are highest in nutrients
- Cattle will select grain first, then husk and leaf and finally cob and stalk

Is there another option?



Stretching the Grazing Season

Stockpile Corn

- Why harvest corn if you know you're going to feed it
- Portion of the standing corn as needed
- Remember feeding excess grain can cause acidosis

Grazing Management Tips

- Learn To Manage Your Pastures
- Avoid over or under grazing
- Apply fertilizer as needed (take a soil test)
- Re-seed pastures if necessary

Grazing Management Tips

- Commit Yourself Totally To Making It Work
- Make The Transition Gradually
- Solicit A Lot Of Advice, But Make Your Own Decisions
- Stay Flexible And Keep Investments Low
- Plan, Plan, & Re-plan

