



ABOUT PUBLIC LANDS

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Stock Return Forms for Grazing Dispositions

Alberta's grazing lands are an important and valuable resource. They warrant careful, long-term stewardship and protection. Thoughtful planning of their care and use will keep these lands in good condition for continued grazing. Grazing opportunities are based on the capability (climate, soil, vegetation) of the rangeland, management needs to sustain wildlife, timber, fisheries and other resources, and also the range management strategies that are applied.

The *Public Lands Act* and regulations provide direction to the land manager and grazing disposition holders as to what can occur on public land in Alberta. Grazing disposition holders are required to submit an annual stock return form, listing the number of livestock grazed on the disposition. If a grazing disposition holder fails to submit a stock return form, the land manager will discuss this with the lease holder to ensure compliance. An example of the stock return form is attached.

The information on the stock return forms helps the province monitor the use of rangeland and ensure that grazing levels are sustainable. The province relies on the disposition holder to be a good steward and manager of the grazing land. Filing an annual stock return report with the province is part of that responsibility and commitment.

Shared Management

Grazing disposition holders assist with the stewardship of public land to ensure that future generations of Albertans are able to enjoy the same resource values and uses.

Many lessees work with the public land manager in extension and research

activities. Annual stock return forms that are submitted by grazing disposition holders demonstrate this partnership with public lands.

Monitoring Lease Conditions

One of the basic principles of range management is balancing the grazing needs of livestock with the available forage. Carry-over, a portion of the current year's growth left ungrazed, is essential to protect range plants, soil, watershed and wildlife habitat. Since forage production is affected by a number of factors, such as available rainfall or general growing conditions, it is helpful for the disposition holder to know how and if the range management decisions are affecting the range.

Collecting and recording information about stocking rates, range condition, rainfall, grazing patterns and problem areas is the best way to know what is happening to the range. This form of monitoring helps the disposition holder plan and implement changes in grazing management, when the need arises.

Periodically, provincial government staff inspect public lands and review grazing management with the disposition holder. Range management specialists are also available to provide information on grazing practices and the health of the rangeland.

Carrying Capacity and Stocking Rate

The carrying capacity of a grazing disposition is an estimate of the proper stocking rate for the disposition. In other

words, this is the maximum number of animal unit months (AUMs) that can be grazed on the disposition. The grazing rental rates are based on this number of AUMs. To keep the rangeland healthy, the carrying capacity leaves about half of the forage. Several factors affect the condition of the range, including prolonged drought and continuous use. If this has occurred, or the grazing lease is in poor condition, the stocking rate should be set below the normal carrying capacity. This gives the range a chance to improve.

Livestock Ownership and Fencing

Under the *Public Lands Act* and regulations, all livestock grazed on the disposition must be owned by the disposition holder. As part of the disposition agreement, the land must be adequately fenced to ensure the livestock remain within the disposition.

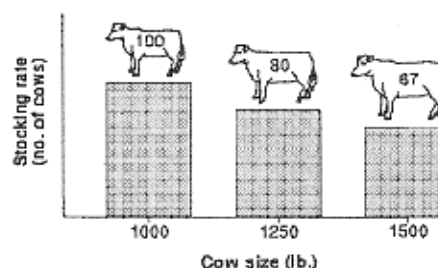
Animal Unit Equivalents (Cows Average Weight)

This table gives the animal unit equivalents for various classes of livestock.

Type of Livestock	AUE
Cattle:	
Cow – 1,000 lb. With or without 6 month old unweaned calf	1.0
Weaned calf	0.5
Yearling heifers/steers (759 lb.)	0.75
Bulls (2 years and older)	1.5
Horses:	
Yearling	0.75
2 year old	1.0
3 year old or older	1.5
Sheep:	
Weaned lamb – yearlings to 12 months old	0.15
Ewe/with or without unweaned lambs	0.2
Ram	0.26

Add 0.1 to AUE for every 100 lb. That the AU is over the standard table value (for example: 1,400 lb. cow = 1.4 AUE)

The animal unit (AU) defines the daily forage intake for a “standard” animal. In grazing terms, the AU represents on mature cow of approximately 1,000 lb., either dry or with a



calf up to six months of age. Livestock that consume more or less forage because of their type, class or sizes are given animal unit equivalents (AUE). The value recorded is for one animal, not a herd. As an example, if the average cow weighs 1,300 lb., the animal unit equivalent is 1.3.

This figure illustrates how stocking rates change with cow size:

Supplemental Feed, Hay Cut, Other Land Fenced and Used Together with Grazing Disposition

The total number of AUMs derived from supplemental feed, hay cut, and other lands utilized with the disposition as a unit, is also calculated.

If you require updated information, contact any of the offices below:

Alberta Sustainable Resource Development
Lands Division
Rangeland Management Branch
9920 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2M4
Telephone: (780) 427-3595

Lands Dispositions Branch
9920 - 108 Street
Edmonton, Alberta T5K 2M4
Telephone: (780) 427-3464

OR call the closest Lands Division office in your area

OR you can visit the Lands Division Website at:
<http://www.srd.alberta.ca/lands/default.aspx>