

GMP – HOW TO DEVELOP YOUR PLAN

Planning is a process of working from ideas and vision to decisions and action. It's also a work in progress. Expect to continually assess actions and adjust your plan to keep you on track.

Over time, a comprehensive plan provides a mechanism – through record-keeping and monitoring – to improve BMPs and your ratings in the riparian risk assessment. It can also signal diligence in minimizing environmental impacts.

We'll explore steps 1–5 in greater detail on pages 66-95.

8-STEP OVERVIEW

Step 1. Set goals. (pg. 66)

- ▶ Develop riparian management goals that are compatible with your overall long-term farm business goals.
- ▶ Integrate production targets with financial goals and planned environmental improvements.
- ▶ Prioritize goals.
- ▶ Assess and redefine the goals if necessary.



Set business goals that reflect both grazing requirements and site limitations.

Step 2. Conduct an inventory of your streamside-grazing area. (pg. 68)

- ▶ Use air photos and soil maps.
- ▶ Map the facilities. Include fences, gates, stock-watering stations, corrals, power sources, salt and mineral stations, trails and roads.
- ▶ Map pasture sites. A pasture site is an area of land with the potential to produce a specific kind and amount of vegetation. Common Ontario pasture sites include: loamy, stony, floodplain, wetland, and sandy.
- ▶ Map pasture types such as native grassland, shrub type, woodland type, marsh type, and seeded pasture.
- ▶ Conduct a pasture condition survey. Pasture condition assessment is based on comparing species composition on a specific pasture site to an undisturbed site with the same potential. This assessment works well for the upland pasture sites and forms the basis for stocking rate recommendations and other grazing management decisions.



Use maps and aerial photos to map the land and water features of your streamside grazing.

To assess pasture condition, compare vegetation composition on a pasture site to an undisturbed site with the same potential.

Riparian areas are both productive and fragile. Developing an effective grazing management plan for riparian areas requires a detailed inventory and assessment of local conditions.

Conduct a risk assessment for your riparian area.



Step 3. Conduct a riparian risk assessment. (pg. 73)

- Consider potential and actual risks of environmental damage with respect to site features, sensitive areas, management practices, and downstream use.

Use this book and other references together with your own observations to determine herd forage requirements from streamside grazing areas.



Step 4. Determine forage requirements. (pg. 87)

- Determine livestock grazing forage requirements in order to plan the proper location, paddock size, and grazing frequency and duration.

Now that you've set goals and inventoried grazing resources, you're ready to analyze the information and develop options.



Step 5. Analyze, interpret, and select a management system. (pg. 88)

- Look for risks and opportunities. Examine the information you've collected to uncover potential improvement opportunities.
- Select management practices that will capitalize on those opportunities.
- Take into account:
 - ▷ the needs of both the upland and riparian areas
 - ▷ balancing forage demand with forage supply, allowing flexibility to meet year-to-year fluctuations in forage productivity.

Step 6. Develop an action plan.

- ▶ If needed, redesign a paddock and facilities layout that suits the local conditions and goals.
- ▶ Schedule BMPs for pasture improvement and protection of sensitive high-risk areas.



Schedule BMPs to improve production and protect sensitive areas.

Step 7. Implement the plan.

- ▶ Get how-to knowledge:
 - ▷ get advice
 - ▷ get permission
 - ▷ get going!



Seek professional assistance where necessary to put the plan into action.

Step 8. Monitor and update the plan.

- ▶ Monitor riparian health and pasture condition.
- ▶ Check on pasture performance in response to improvement BMPs.
- ▶ Update plan accordingly.
- ▶ Redo risk assessment to evaluate impact of GMP actions.



Grazing management planning is an ongoing process. Assess and update the plan to increase its effectiveness each year.



Appropriate streamside grazing involves managing livestock distribution.