



Cattle Producer's Handbook

Range and Pasture Section

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Range Management Terms, Definitions, and Acronyms

Allotment—Area of federal lands designated for the grazing use of a prescribed number and kind of livestock under a specific plan of management.

Allowable Use—The degree of utilization considered desirable and attainable on various parts of a ranch or allotment considering the present nature and condition of the resource, management objectives, and level of management.

Animal Impact—The sum total of the direct physical influence animals have on the land: trampling, dunging, urinating, salivating, rubbing, digging, etc.

Animal Unit—One mature (1,000 pounds) cow or the equivalent based upon average daily forage allowance of 26 pounds dry matter per day under range conditions. This allows for forage trampled or used by other animals. (Animal Unit Conversions: Yearling .6 AU, Bull 1.25 AU)

Animal Unit Month—(1) Amount of forage required by an animal-unit for one month; (2) tenure of one animal-unit for a period of one month.

Annual Plant—A plant that completes its life cycle and dies in one year or less.

Annual Range—Range on which the principal forage plants are self-perpetuating, annual, herbaceous species.

Apparent Trend—An interpretation of trend based on observation and professional judgment at a single point in time (see Trend).

Available Forage—That portion of the forage production that is accessible for use by a specified kind or class of grazing animal.

Available Soil Moisture—Water in the soil that is accessible to plants for growth and development.

Bare Ground—All soil surface not covered by vegetation, rock, or litter.

Basal Area—Cross sectional area of the stem or stems of a plant or of all plants in a stand. Herbaceous and

small woody plants are measured at or near the ground level; larger woody plants are measured at breast or other designated height. (synonym: basal cover)

Base Property—Land or controlled livestock water that qualifies a person for a grazing privilege, permit, or preference on other land, either public or private (same as Commensurate Property).

Biennial—A plant that lives for two years, producing vegetative growth the first year and usually blooming, fruiting, and dying in the second year. Usually grouped with annuals.

Biological Soil Crust—Soil crust formed by living organisms and their by-products, creating a crust of soil particles bound together by organic materials. Types of biological soil crusts include cryptogamic, microbiotic, cryptobiotic, and micophytic crusts.

Biomass—The total amount of living plants and animals above and below ground in an area at a given time.

Biome—A major biotic unit consisting of plant and animal communities having similarities in form and environmental conditions, such as the desert, chaparral, or grassland biomes.

Brittle Environments—Characterized by unreliable precipitation (regardless of amount), poor distribution of precipitation through the year as a whole, high rate of oxidation and physical decay (weathering) in old plant and animal material, and very slow successional development from bare and smooth soil surfaces. With a lack of adequate physical disturbance for years, the plant communities become simpler, less diversified, and less stable. A continuous scale exists from non-brittle to brittle environments.

Browse—Leaf and twig growth of shrubs, woody vines, and trees available for use by animals. Also, to search for or consume browse.

Bunchgrasses—Grasses that reproduce by seed and/or tillering and grow in tufts.

*Originally authored by Bill Frost and George Ruyle, Arizona State University, Rancher's Management Guide.
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