

RESOURCES

PROCEED WITH CAUTION

- Limit vehicle and foot traffic as much as possible.
- Document areas that were burnt and severity of fire.
- Record any areas where invasive weeds or grasses were located before the fire and monitor for regrowth.
- Trees or power poles may be comprised during the fire and should be monitored, especially during high winds.

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The information provided in this brochure is considered “best practices”. As a landowner, we encourage you to use your own judgement to determine which practices apply to you and your situation. If you lease land that has been affected by wildfire, we encourage you to contact the landowner and work together to determine best practices moving forward. If you have any questions or would like to discuss more options, please call your local University of Wyoming Extension office.

UW COUNTY EXTENSION

The University of Wyoming has an office in every county staffed by folks ready to help answer your questions!

USDA | FSA | NRCS

Check eligibility for emergency financial assistance with your local office.

COMMUNITY

Don't underestimate the value of your relationships with friends, neighbors, and community members. In tough times, these are some of the most important resources.

Be a good neighbor!

Grazing After a Wildfire



Extension

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FEDERAL LANDS

- **Get in touch with appropriate agency to determine rules and restrictions.**

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WEEDS

- Targeted overgrazing may suppress or help manage invasive species.
- Watch for weeds and invasive plants along fire lines, roads and other disturbed areas.
- Equipment such as bull dozers, firetrucks, ATVs, etc. can easily spread weed seeds.
- Dormant seeds may rapidly germinate and establish from seed bank if conditions are favorable.
- Record where hay is fed to livestock – weed seeds may rapidly germinate in hay and become established on the new site.
- **When possible, wait to chemically control weeds until:**
 - Confirmation that undesirable plants become dominant.
 - Native grasses and plants have adequate time to regenerate.

GRAZING

- **Delay – at least one month after fire or until new growth appears**
 - Length of time depends on fire intensity and weather conditions
- **Grazing management**
 - Consider a lighter stocking rate
 - Livestock & wildlife are often attracted to burnt areas with new, green growth. Overgrazing may affect longevity of the forage.
 - New seedlings (sprouts) have short roots and are easily pulled out of the ground, while well-established perennial grasses will regrow from old roots.
 - Remove animals or supplement hay to avoid overgrazing
- **Targeted grazing**
 - Encourage desirable plant growth
 - Promote plant diversity
 - Consider a rotational management plan

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MONITOR

- **Regular & consistent monitoring for:**
 - Pasture conditions – adjust grazing pressure accordingly
 - Plant recovery and proper regeneration

ANIMAL IMPACTS

- Monitor for respiratory issues caused by exposure to ash or dust.
- Monitor for any poisonous plants that may germinate in affected areas.

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CHANGES IN SOIL

- Fire can cause soil to become hydrophobic, meaning it will shed water instead of absorbing water.
- **Higher risk of soil erosion from:**
 - Excess rain or snow melt. This can cause flooding, slope failure, and mudslides even months after fire.
 - Increased hoof action of livestock and wildlife.
 - Without plant cover, wind erosion will increase.

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FENCES

- Check all fence lines, as they may have been cut for emergency vehicle access.
- Wooden posts can burn above and below the ground, caution should be taken when replacing posts.
- Wires may be weakened depending on the severity of the fire.
- Carefully check all fences, especially perimeter fences, and repair as needed.