

# Mountain West Grazing Connection Website Launched

By Devon Ragen



## **Are you ready to take advantage of all of the benefits of livestock integration?**

Through a collaborative effort between NCAT, Montana State University, and a WSARE research grant, a new website has been launched. The Mountain West Grazing Connection website is a place where livestock and land-owners across the Intermountain West region can find and connect with each other.

The Mountain West Grazing Connection was created as a tool to help match landowners with livestock owners in order to establish mutually beneficial relationships. By cultivating these partnerships, farmers don't have to be ranchers and ranchers don't have to be farmers.

The site is free to use and setting up an account is fast and simple. You can add a listing for available grazing land or livestock in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming and Utah. The website has resources to help you get started integrating livestock into your operation (ex. Writing a grazing contract, fencing solutions, water sources, etc.) as well as real-life success stories from farmers and ranchers that are making livestock integration work for them.

While Montana's population has steadily increased, pasture and cropland has decreased by over 2.5 million acres in less than 10 years (with other states following similar trends.) Over the last decade, 18 million acres of ranch and farmland in the United States has shifted to other uses. Prior to World War II, farms were small and diversified, incorporating livestock and several crops. Currently, most farms are large scale, highly specialized, and focus on low diversity. As the agricultural landscape continues to transform, farmers are starting to look for ways to re-integrate livestock into cropland to take advantage of the numerous benefits.

Livestock integration can enhance nutrient cycling, reduce inputs such as fertilizer and herbicides, lessen fire fuels reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires, add microbes to the soil, increase soil organic matter, boost carbon sequestration, and improve crop yields and soil quality.

If you have been on the fence about integrating livestock into your operation, whether it's by grazing cover crops, crop aftermath, or weed management, this is a great opportunity to establish relationships with ranchers and break ground.

Please check out Mountain West Grazing Connection and help spread the word.

[www.mountainwestgrazing.com](http://www.mountainwestgrazing.com)

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