

Your 2023 Grazing Charts from Troy Bishopp – Choose a chart, make a plan, and get a life!



By [Kathy Voth](#), February 20, 2023

<https://onpasture.com/2023/02/20/your-2023-grazing-charts-from-troy-bishopp-choose-a-chart-make-a-plan-and-get-a-life/>

[On Pasture's purpose has always been the same:](#) to help you develop a grazing business based on a vision and goals that ensure a happy, healthy life, and a grazing operation that gets you there. That means helping you identify your goals, as we did with these [examples from fellow graziers and some resources](#). That's the foundation for how you manage and all the decisions you make. It also means [mapping your resources](#) so you can be clear about what you're working with.

The next step is to begin work on your Grazing Chart

Troy



Bishopp is out standing in his field!

Every year, Troy Bishopp updates the Grazing Charts and [posts them at his office's website here](#). Thank you Troy! I've also downloaded them and included them in this post to make it easy for you.

The Grazing Chart is a tool you can use to plan how you will manage grass, animals and time. It's a place where you can store data about weather and soil health, and it provides a history of your decisions. Troy Bishopp says "A tool like this is imperative to create a healthy diverse sward, optimize animal

performance, plan more grandchildren/family days and become increasingly resilient on the farm or ranch.”

[Download PDF](#)

ENE10-115 ([project overview](#))

Project Type:
Professional Development Program

Funds awarded in 2010: \$158,675.00

Projected End Date: 12/31/2014

Grant Recipient: Central NY RC&D Project, Inc.

Region: Northeast

State: New York

Project Leader:
[Troy Bishopp](#)

Email

Central NY RC&D Project, Inc.

Development of the grazing charts was funded by NE SARE (Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education). [Read more about the project and partners here.](#)

Troy developed these free grazing charts with a team of farmers and graziers. They looked at examples from noted, successful graziers like Jim Gerrish, Greg Judy, Ben Bartlett, Sarah Flack and Nathan Weaver. The team talked about their opportunities and challenges, like figuring out how to rotate livestock to make the most of their forage, and what to do when drought hit during grazing season. They

considered the stresses that we all face balancing work life and time for fun with friends and family, all while making a profit.

Because every operation is different, Troy created these paper charts that work for both large and small operations, for those grazing year round, and those working with shorter seasons, and for plain communities in their region who don't use technology. He updates the calendar dates on the charts every year and shares them here so fellow graziers can improve their operations and lives.

Troy has successfully used this grazing chart and its holistic foundation to get through drought. Pre-grazing chart days, there were years he was out of grass by October but since he started charting his management, he's been able to extend his grazing season into December. The grazing chart has been important in emergencies, making it possible for Troy's family to keep everything up and running when he was recovering from heart surgery. It has also given him more time with his family and friends. It's no wonder he's such a proponent for the charts – or for any planning tool, no matter the style.

If you're ready to get started, here are the steps you can take:

1. Set your expectations. Remember that anyone can do this!

If, like other folks we've heard from, you're hesitant because you don't know the right way to use it, put that worry aside. There is no wrong way to use the chart.

If you're thinking, "***But how can I plan an entire season of grazing?***" put that aside too. Most practitioners are using the chart to plan out 1 to 2 rotations ahead. If you're just starting out, try a 10 day plan and gain confidence in reading your land and seeing how planning works for you.

If you haven't done this before, you won't be perfect. That's ok. No one's going to grade you on how you use your chart. Start by pre-loading your chart with items you want to achieve for the season. Then use it in a way that's comfortable for you and meets your goals.

And if there's some other tool that works well for you – use that one! We're all for planning, no matter how you do it!

2. Pick out the chart below that works best for you, then click to download it.

We have charts that run from April to January and from April 1 to March 31. Choose the time frame that works for you. Just pick the one that has enough paddocks to work for your operation, then click to download it. Ta Da! Not sure

what you want? Download them all! They're free!

The charts are Xcel spreadsheets. That means you can use them right on your computer. However, lots of folks prefer paper copies. I've found the easiest way to get a printable copy is to follow these steps:

- 1) Save the spreadsheet as a PDF.
Click on "File" in the menu bar.
Click on "Save As" in the drop down menu.
Choose "PDF" from the File Format box.
Click on the "Save" button and you're done.

2) When you open the PDF document, you'll see that the chart has been turned into a number of pages. Just print them out, then get out your scissors and some tape, and cut and tape until you have your complete chart. Or, you can just leave it in pages and put it in a three ring binder as some folks do.

This chart isn't your only option. It's just a free option we offer.

Holistic Management International, the Savory Institute and Ranch Management Consultants all offer their own versions. Visit their websites to purchase them.

If you're interested in computer-based planning, both Maya Grazing and Pasture Map offer digital management tools for a monthly or annual fee.

We support any grazing planning tool that creates success for you!

April – January Grazing Charts

- 10 Paddock April – January
- 20 Paddock April – January
- 30 Paddock April – January
- 40 Paddock April – January

12 Months Grazing Charts

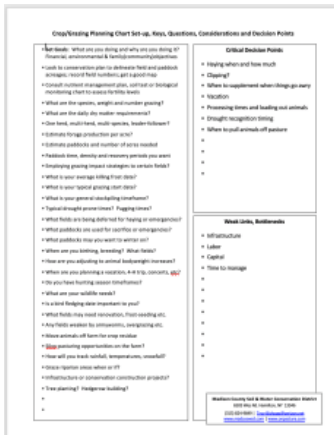
- 10 Paddock Chart 12 Months
- 20 Paddock Chart 12 Months
- 30 Paddock Chart 12 Months
- 40 Paddock Chart 12 Months
- 50 Paddock Chart 12 Months

20 Paddock – No Dates

20 paddock – No dates

Didn't find what you need? Pick the Excel version that is closest and then make your own modifications.

[Click here to download your grazing chart questions worksheet](#)



3. Answer some questions about your operation

A blank grazing chart can be a scary thing if you don't know where to start. So Troy also created a worksheet with questions to get you thinking about your operational needs and how to schedule your grazing moves to meet livestock, forage, soil, wildlife and personal needs. Let's take a look at the questions and

how they help you figure out what to put on your blank grazing chart. [Then you can download the full worksheet here.](#)

The first set of question gives you an idea of how you'll manage your paddock sizes and when you move livestock.

- *What are the species, weight and number grazing?*
- *What are their daily dry matter requirements?*
- *What is estimated forage production per acre?*
- *How are you adjusting to animal bodyweight increases?*

If you need some help with answering these questions, [here's a walk through with Troy along with some links to articles that will help you with your estimates and a helpful worksheet from Troy.](#)

Based on your answers, you'll be able to estimate the number of acres needed to feed your stock. You'll also be able to decide on paddock sizes, and how long animals will spend in each paddock so they get the food they need while also making sure the forage in your pastures has adequate time to recover.

With all of this, you have what you need to begin penciling in a schedule on your grazing chart to show where animals will be when. But before you start, let's develop a little more context with some more questions.

- *What is your typical grazing start date?*
- *What is your average killing frost date?*
- *What is your general stockpiling timeframe?*

The first and second questions give you a kind of boundary for when grass is actively growing. The question about stockpiling helps you think about paddocks you may want to skip, or how quickly you move your herd to allow grass to grow and provide winter grazing stockpile. The questions below help you think about challenges that might come up, and wildlife needs you might need to adjust around.

- *Do you have drought prone times? Pugging times?*

- *What fields are being deferred for haying or emergencies?*
- *What paddocks are used for sacrifice or emergencies?*
- *What paddocks may you want to winter on?*
- *When are you birthing, breeding? What fields?*
- *Do you have hunting season timeframes?*
- *What are your wildlife needs?*
- *Is a bird fledging date important to you?*
- *What fields may need renovation, frost-seeding etc?*

4. Don't Forget to Have a Life!



Troy and two of his grandkids on one of his planned weekend getaways. The bonus is that fun time together also helps future generations see that farming can be fun so they'll consider it as a career option.

By now you may be sketching out an idea of where you want your livestock when, and what kind of work you'll be doing to make it all happen. But before you get to busy with that, remember

Troy's motto: ***"If you want to have fun, you have to plan for it, or you won't have any."***

Right now, before you write in anything else on your grazing chart, write down your vacation plans, 4-H trips in the works, the county fair, concerts, and anything else that makes life worth living. Those are the things you're going to plan everything else around. It might mean that you create a larger paddock for a few days while you're gone for the weekend. Or you might include reminders

to coordinate with neighbors or the folks who work for you so everything is covered while you're away.

Take a Look at the Grass Whisperer's actual 2013-2014 grazing chart example.

It's always helpful to see how it works for other graziers. So, Troy shares [this example of his 2103-2014 grazing chart](#) to give you an idea how he uses it.

Here are some highlights of what he does with his grazing chart:

- Troy adds events, like the organic inspection and his annual participation in the Daniel Barden Highland Mudfest (in memory of one of the Sandy Hook victims). Look for other events he added to the calendar, like his anniversary and a family vacation.
- Notice that he is also tracking his organic matter in each paddock so he can see how his grazing changes this over time.
- At the bottom of the picture you can see that he planned to graze (black Xs) but fed instead. The green Xs show when he actually grazed. Tracking the difference between planned activities and what really happened can help you improve your planning as you go.

YEAR 2013-2014 Bishopp Farm

Blank X's(planned) **Green X's(actual)**

	OM %	PADDOCKS		APRIL																
		Size	Number / Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
				M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	S	M	T	W
	6.1	4	1																	
	6.3	1	2																	
	7.8	2	3																	
	5	2	4																	
	4.3	4	5																	
	3.5	5	6																	
	3.9	5	7																	
	3.3	4	8																	
	3.9	5	9																	
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	4.2	5	11																	
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	4.6	4	13																	
	4.2	4	14																	lo
	4.6	6	15																	
	3.5	5	16																	
	3.8	12	17	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	3.9	3	18																	x
	4.8	3	19																	x
	6.2	5	20																	x
		2	wet																	

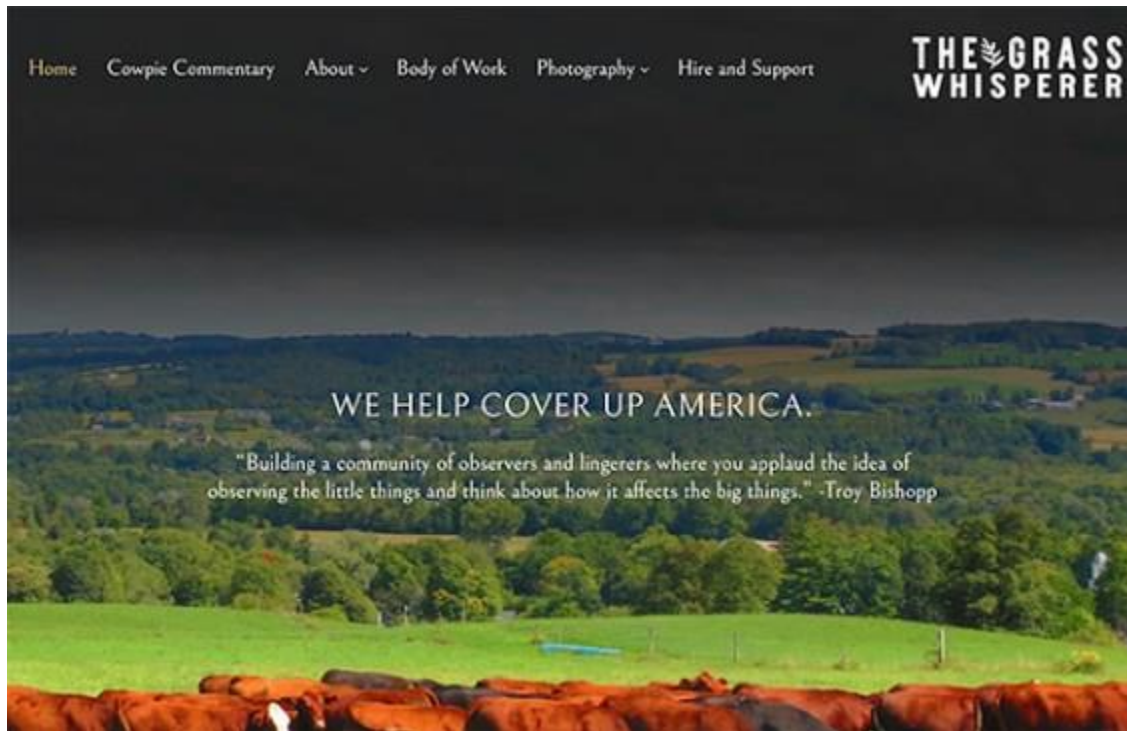
organic insp.
Daniel Jagden Highland Mudfest

central watering paddock

Feed bales on pasture

- Troy also tracks rainfall and snowfall to track how much precipitation he's getting along with the temperature, how many animals he's feeding and the dry matter they're consuming. Hot days are highlighted in red. Because he has a nutrient management plan for his farm, the chart allows him to capture data as he goes which helps him make better decisions.

And hey – why not let Troy know that you appreciate his efforts. He does it out of the goodness of his heart and [saying thank you would help him know it's worthwhile](#). You can also [visit his website](#) where he shares his "Cowpie Commentary," some great photos, and even a virtual hug. There's always something there that makes me think and/or smile.



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