

**The Goals and Benefits of Multi-Species Grazing**

- Full utilization of the forage: different animals prefer different plant species and graze at different heights and intensities allowing full use of the land available.
- Pasture maintenance and clipping: if properly managed, cattle keep pastures clipped to avoid mowing; chickens dethatch sod and spread manure; hogs root weeds and turn sod.
- Parasite control; different species act as dead-end hosts for the parasites of others; chickens and hogs root through manure and eat and/or expose parasite eggs.



Hens following cattle



Highland cattle utilize rough forage



Hogs root up weeds

**Tools for Multi-Species Grazing**

- Permanent high-tensile perimeter fencing, temporary cross-fencing, electric nets.
- Strong, well-grounded main fence charger and portable solar chargers for remote areas.
- Portable, reliable water systems.
- Permanent and/or temporary shelters including hoop houses, sheds, trees, hedgerows, etc.
- Accessibility for feed delivery if needed.
- Portable salt and kelp feeders for horses and cattle.
- Animal moving and handling skills.



Portable nets &amp; shelters for hens and hogs



Portable water system for hogs

**Challenges of Multi-Species Grazing****Poultry**

- Chickens prefer and can better utilize short forage rich in broadleaf plants (esp. clover).
- Chickens left in place for long periods will dig dust baths and over fertilize near shelters.
- High strung birds like hybrid layers may “explode” over even the tallest nets.
- Grazing with cattle, horses, or hogs may startle chickens over fences.
- Geese and turkeys are aggressive grazers and require rich pasture and frequent moving.
- Waterfowl can easily become tangled in electric nets and must be carefully trained.
- Turkeys require heavy-duty roosts in their portable or permanent shelters.
- Large turkeys may learn to “rush” a poorly charged fence and push it over.
- Poultry nets **must** be kept very hot to deter predators.





Turkeys behind high nets w/ portable feeders



Move chicken feeders often



Small calves can scoot under poly wire

## Cattle

- Adult cattle can easily be fenced with one or two strands, but containing calves requires several strands or even nets.
- Lactating cows must have constant access to large amounts of fresh water.
- During the hot months cows grazing in unshaded paddocks must have access to other shaded areas or only grazed at night.
- Horned breeds accidentally rip down or become entangled in fencing (esp. nets).
- Bulls and boars do not always get along, watch for aggressive behavior if co-pasturing.

## Horses

- Horses can be choosy about what they graze and may seriously over or under graze certain areas. Following sheep or cows with horses can be very successful.
- Horses tend to stomp and compact loafing areas around drinkers and shelters.
- Horses and cattle typically co-pasture very well, but some bossy horses may hoard supplemental feed or shelters.
- Horses may harass and chase young calves through fences.
- Horses are the easiest animals to move, but sometimes fail to see newly moved fences; **use very visible fencing for horses.**



Horses can be fenced with anything

Horses can impact the ground quickly

Hogs can completely turn over the ground

## Hogs

- Piglets newly introduced to electric fencing need to learn behind a solid barrier like hog panels or woven wire fencing or learn from experienced mothers.
- Trained hogs can easily be fenced with one or two strands of electric wire or nets, but can quickly bury these fences with flipped sod or other debris.
- Hogs without rings root and destroy sod very quickly. Hog pastures must be harrowed and reseeded frequently.
- Hogs create wallows and other large holes and bring up rocks.
- Some hogs will dine on chickens and other poultry if co-pastured.



## Resources

Premier 1 Supplies

2031 300<sup>th</sup> St., Washington, IA 52353

1-800-282-6631

[www.premier1supplies.com](http://www.premier1supplies.com)

Fencing, chargers, portable feeders

Farmer Boy Ag Supply 1133 Rt. 318, Waterloo, NY 13165

1-866-453-4001

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

Portable feeders and drinkers