

The cover features a central vertical green band. On either side of this band are vertical panels showing a close-up, black and white photograph of tall grass. The green band contains the title text in white. The title 'AGS' is at the top in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below it, 'ADVANCED GRAZING SYSTEMS' is written in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. A short horizontal green line is positioned below this text. At the bottom of the green band, 'MENTOR HANDBOOK' is written in the same smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. The entire cover is framed by a thin green border that forms a square shape at the corners.

# AGS

ADVANCED  
GRAZING SYSTEMS

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MENTOR  
HANDBOOK

# MODULE 7

# MENTORSHIP

# MODULE 7 - MENTORSHIP

A

Defining Mentorship

B

The Role of a Mentor

C

Pitfalls of Mentorship

D

Liability Issues

E

Understanding Context

## Module 7 – Mentorship

### A – Defining Mentorship

A mentor is defined as an experienced or trusted advisor. Mentorship is the guidance provided by a mentor. That is, what we are looking for from a mentor, advice, and guidance in setting up and designing a grazing plan. A mentor will need to have good communication skills and the ability to articulate details. In short, they need teaching skills. Our goal is to allow the producers to make their own decisions.

### B - The Role of a Mentor

The first fence post is always the hardest one to pound, so the job of the mentor is to help guide the producer towards a suitable grazing plan that will fit within the farm's context. We need to be careful as mentors not to “tell them what to do”, but instead give them ideas and help them decide what is best for their operation. Every farm is different, and every environment is different, so we need to be aware of the unique situation at every farm. What works best on one farm might not be the best plan on another. The key is to provide them with the core basics of an Advanced Grazing System (AGS) and guide them to make the best decisions for the context of their operation. This may also be an opportunity for the mentor to develop their own private consulting and education service over time. If and when the mentorship process comes to a close, the

mentors should be able to continue helping others in a private consulting capacity if they so choose.

How the mentorship program is delivered will be flexible and may be delivered differently in different areas and with different mentors. This could in part be set up as classroom education style and/or a one-on-one farm mentorship. Virtual options will be available, as we will be developing online content to help facilitate the mentorship process.

### C - Pitfalls of Mentorship

It is important to set up some boundaries at the beginning of each mentorship. This will be up to each individual mentor to explain how much follow up mentorship is allowed and by what method the producer is to contact the mentor. If this boundary is not set, there is the possibility that the producer will become reliant on the mentor and contact them far too often. We would also expect the mentor to maintain the privacy and the confidentiality of each producer. We need to be respectful of all our participants.

### E – Liability

Liability can also be a concern. Often, a producer is looking for help when they are in a financial crisis. We need to be cautious of advice given as to not make the situation worse. Sometimes to jump in with both feet is the best option, but in other situations, 'baby steps' might be the best way forward. We do not want to tell them what to do. It is better to give a few options and allow the producer to choose their own way forward.

## F – Understanding Context

Every Farm is Different. We have to keep context in the back of our mind when we are mentoring. The choices made need to fit within the context of the individual farm. There are many factors that will need to be considered when choosing a plan. There are personal constraints that each person or family will have. This may be physical limitations or it may be time limitations. It is also important to try to understand the personality styles of those involved in order to guide them in a suitable direction. There will be herd constraints at each operation that will also need to be discussed. The type and class of livestock may change the setup required as well as the style of grazing. We need to be aware of any physical land constraints within the farming operation as well as any environmental concerns. A suitable grazing plan needs to fit the context of the operation. What works on the mentor's farm might not be suitable for every farm.

### Personality Styles

DISC is an acronym that stands for the four main personality profiles described in the DiSC model:

(D)ominance,  
(I)nfluence,  
(S)teadiness  
(C)onscientiousness

- People with D personalities tend to be confident and place an emphasis on accomplishing bottom-line results.

- People with I personalities tend to be more open and place an emphasis on relationships and influencing or persuading others.
- People with S personalities tend to be dependable and place the emphasis on cooperation and sincerity.
- People with C personalities tend to place the emphasis on quality, accuracy, expertise, and competency.

In the context of each farm, we need to account for the personality types of the members included and especially in management. Some industries tend to attract one type of personality over the others. Agriculture is no exception as it has a strong tendency towards the S Personality. They are the dependable, hard working people who stick it out. They do not like to change. The majority of the other styles tend to leave to other professions. The "D" is not going to follow Dad forever and do as they are told until someday they might get control. They are leaders and will go lead elsewhere. The "I" has a hard time working alone. Sitting in a tractor all day on their own is not for them. They will leave for a more social setting. And the "C" needs structure and strives for perfection. Plans constantly changing and "farmer fixing" things does not go over well with a "C". That leaves us with the "S" personality that sticks it out and eventually takes over the farm. They don't want to change and are content doing what they have always done.

Population Break down of the four Personality Styles:

D= 18% I= 28% S= 40% C= 14%

Agricultural Breakdown of the four Personality Styles:

D= 10% I= 12% S= 70% C= 8%