

Touchwood Hills Conservation Ranch



About the Location

- Touchwood Hills Demonstration Ranch (THCR) is a unique Ducks Unlimited Canada property in east central Saskatchewan near the village of Lestock. THCR sits on Grey Wooded soils within the Black Soil Zone.
- THCR has 6500 acres of undulating tame pasture, aspen bluffs and deep potholes that are grazed annually. The landscape is rich in waterfowl and wildlife habitat. Surrounding land use is predominantly annual cropland.
- THCR is an opportunity to explore new management ideas and demonstrate applied research such as remote livestock watering systems and improving forage production through grazing plans.

The Rotational Grazing Objective

Since 2023, THCR has implemented an Advanced Grazing Systems approach (AGS) in a grazing plan on 320 acres. The goal is to improve overall forage utilization and allow a recovery period by controlling animal distribution using smaller paddocks. Having an adequate rest period will keep the 20-year legume and grass stand competitive against dandelion and encroaching shrubs like snowberry.



Canadian Forage & Grassland Association
Association Canadienne pour les Plantes Fourragères

The Grazing Plan

In 2023, one-strand hotwire was used to create 16 paddocks and an alley. Animals are moved every 2-5 days according to the grazing plan. A trough and portable solar-powered float pump brings water from available wetlands in various paddocks. The alley facilitates easy moving and can house the trough if needed. The paddocks and days of grazing were adjusted in 2024 and 2025 to reflect significantly less rainfall.



Grazing plan paddocks on 320ac at THCR

Virtual Fencing

Virtual fencing technology may be an alternative to traditional cross-fencing. DUC wanted to demonstrate how the collars worked in this hilly landscape and if they could be relied upon to extend the grazing season into the winter. Controlling livestock access to winter feed, such as swaths, corn, or bales, becomes challenging when fencing into frozen ground and snow.

Visit [HERE](#) for videos and more information





Replacement heifers settled quickly after fitted with the eShepherd collars



Portable solar-powered float pump and trough used along alley ensures clean water for livestock



Field Day October 2024 at THCR Rotational Grazing Site

With support from CFGA, DUC started trialing virtual fencing technology from Gallagher’s eShepherd the summer of 2025. A herd of 25 replacement heifers trained very quickly, respecting all boundaries and exclusion areas. A total of 70 animals will be turned out to graze standing corn in December 2025. Special interest is if the solar powered collars will receive enough charge in shorter colder winter days.

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What is AGS?

An advanced grazing system (AGS) uses rotational grazing practices adapted to the landscape.

AGS can help livestock producers by:

- Extending their grazing period
- Increasing the yield of pastures
- Improving the forage quality
- Reducing weed pressure
- Improving nutrient cycling
- Helping to build soil resiliency

Why a Grazing plan?

A grazing plan is an important part of your business, tailored to your own unique farm operation. A well thought-out plan takes the guesswork out of resource and livestock management decisions.

Developing a Grazing Plan

There are Mentors across the province and funding to help! Follow the QR code or visit canadianfga.ca for more details.

