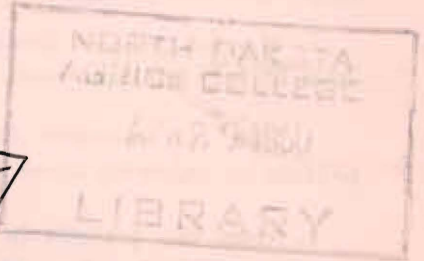
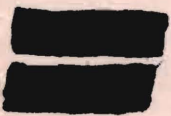


MANAGING IRRIGATED PASTURES



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MANAGING IRRIGATED PASTURES

Management of irrigated pastures has three phases: Grazing, irrigation and regrowth.

For good results these phases must be recognized in setting up your pasture rotation. This means dividing your pasture into two or more parts. The division, easily made with an electric fence, makes it possible to graze part of your pasture while part is being irrigated and allowed to regrow.

Plan your rotations so irrigation can be made every 10 to 15 days. If such frequent irrigations are not made, the top 2 feet of soil will dry out, and pasture production will be poor.

Irrigated pastures should not be overstocked. Your rotation should be planned so livestock is moved while there is still 4 to 6 inches of growth on the field being grazed. If a pasture is grazed closer, it takes the grass longer to regrow. Slower regrowth means less stock can be carried on your pastures.

A good irrigated pasture with a planned rotation should carry from 1½ to 2 cows per acre.

You can increase the carrying capacity of your irrigated pasture by following these good management practices:

1. When the grasses in your pasture start to head they should be clipped. Your stock doesn't like mature grass. If the grass isn't clipped, the production of the plant is lost. Your stock will avoid mature grass and eat legumes. This increases the danger of bloat.
2. Drag your irrigated pasture once or more during the season to scatter manure. Your stock will avoid the rank growth around manure heaps. Any growth not eaten lowers the carrying capacity of your pasture. Time of dragging is determined by the condition of your pasture. When you see that even grazing of the pasture is affected by manure, it is time to drag. A spike-tooth or boss-harrow will scatter the manure effectively. Dry manure will spread best.

3. Irrigate your pasture as soon as you rotate your stock to another field. The top 2 to 3 feet of soil contain most of the pasture roots. It is not necessary to irrigate deeper. Allow your pasture about 2 weeks for regrowth after it is irrigated. By then it will be ready to graze again.
4. If your irrigated pasture contains a legume such as alfalfa or clover, it should respond well to an application of from 150 to 200 pounds of 0-43-0 per acre. You can broadcast it either in the spring or late fall. Manure will help your pasture. Be sure the manure you use on your pasture has heated. Heating kills parasite eggs.
5. Your pasture may drop in production as it gets old. This will be especially true if there are not many legumes in your pasture. One way to keep your pasture producing well is to include it in a crop rotation, allowing from 3 to 5 years for pasture. Plow up your pasture when the grass crowds out the legume, or when it declines noticeably in yield. If it is not in a crop rotation it can be cropped or reseeded to pasture.

IRRIGATED PASTURE AND BLOAT

Your irrigated pasture has a good carrying capacity because plenty of moisture makes grass grow. Alfalfa or clover in your pasture makes bloat a danger. If you don't have legumes like these it will take 600 pounds or more of 33-0-0 commercial fertilizer per acre to provide the nitrogen these legumes will supply.

Nitrogen, either from legumes or fertilizer, is needed to keep your pasture growing well. Legumes are much more productive than most grasses in the hot weather of July and August.

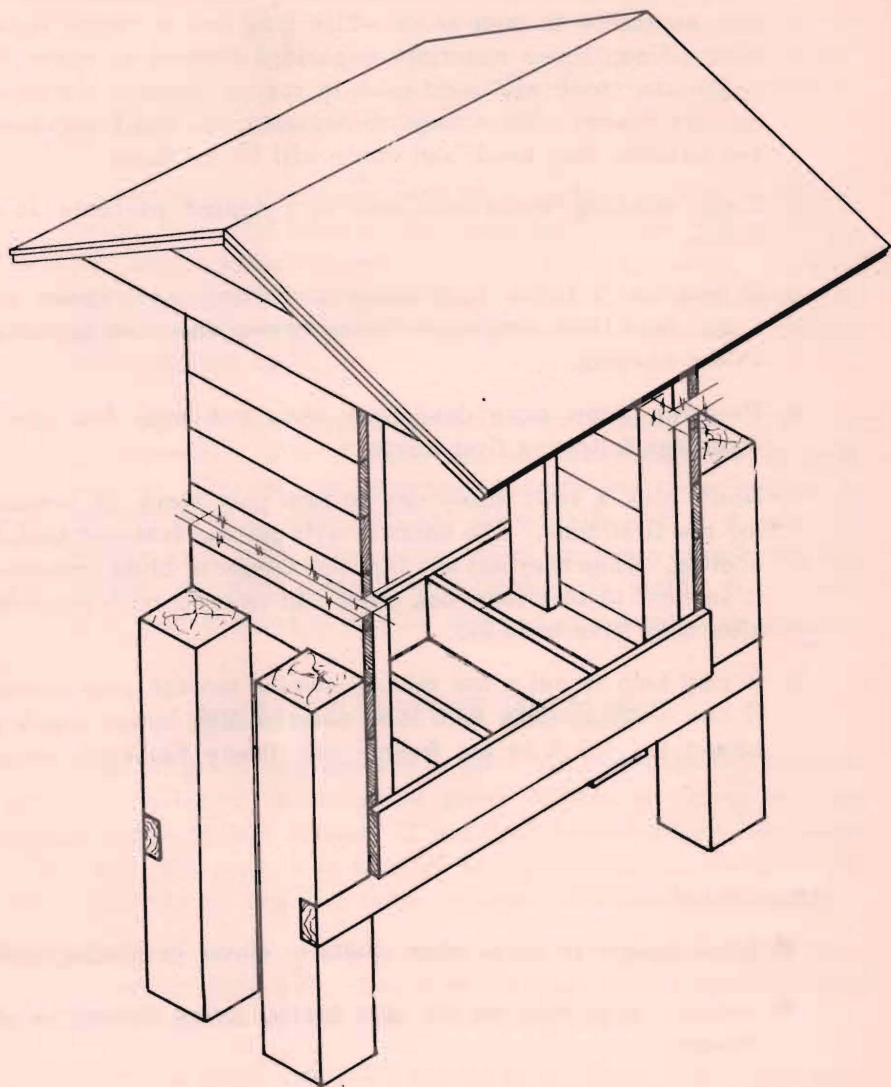
There is much that isn't known about bloat. Here are some precautions you can take that will make it less likely to occur.

1. Don't turn your cattle and sheep on lush legumes if they are hungry.
2. Dry roughage should be made available to stock on irrigated pastures. This helps keep a high roughage content in the animals' stomachs. Your cattle and sheep are not likely to bloat if they have plenty of roughage in their stomachs.

3. Keep limestone, odorless steamed bonemeal and trace mineral salt available to your stock while they are on irrigated pasture. Keep these materials separated instead of mixed, because the stock will need each in varying degrees during the pasture season. When they are separate, the stock may select the material they need, and waste will be cut down.
4. Keep drinking water available in irrigated pastures at all times.
5. If you can't leave your cattle and sheep on pasture over night, feed them roughages before turning them out to pasture in the morning.
6. Pastures seem more dangerous when wet with dew and on mornings following first frosts.
7. Don't pick a raw, windy day to turn your stock on pasture for the first time. The animals will eat too fast and look for shelter. When they eat too fast the danger of bloat increases. It is best to turn them out about mid-morning on a warm day, after they have been fed.
8. It may help to cut a few random swaths through your pasture. If you do this, make sure it is several days before stock are turned in. If it is too freshly cut, frothy bloat may result.

REMEMBER- - - -

- Bloat danger is worse when alfalfa or clover is growing rapidly.
- Animals bloat most readily after having gorged themselves when hungry.
- Bloat is likely to occur when water or minerals are lacking or low.
- Keep a trocar and cannula, or a good knife, handy.
- Keep a supply of bloat medicine on hand. You can get it with instructions for its use from your veterinarian.
- Some animals are chronic bloaters. If you have one in your herd that bloats often, replace it as soon as you can.



Saltbox that can be used in a divided pasture - Available to animals on either side of fence. Note separate compartments for limestone, bonemeal and salt.

RECOMMENDED PASTURE MIXTURES

Brome 8 lbs. Orchard 4 lbs. Reed canary 2 lbs. Alfalfa 2 lbs. (Vernal, Ranger, or Ladak)	} — or — {	Brome 14 lbs. Alfalfa 2 lbs. (Vernal, Ranger, or Ladak)
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The pasture mixture containing Orchard grass and Reed canary grass will have a higher percentage of grass compared with alfalfa during July and August than will the alfalfa-brome pasture. The alfalfa-brome pasture is not as susceptible to winter injury as the Orchard-Reed canary mixture.

Don't seed pasture unless you have a good firm seedbed. Spring seeding is commonly practiced with irrigated pasture. When spring seeding is practiced the seeding should be done early. Irrigated pasture can also be seeded in mid-July on grain stubble after the grain has been cut. If the seeding date is later than mid-July, winter kill becomes a hazard. This practice eliminates most of the weed competition.

Don't put stock on an irrigated pasture the year it is seeded. Withhold grazing until the year after seeding. This gives the pasture a chance to get a vigorous start.

