



2025 Annual Operating Instructions
 Meadows Valley C&H Allotment
 New Meadows Ranger District
 Payette National Forest

These Annual Operating Instructions are a guide for implementing grazing management activities on the Meadows Valley Cattle Allotment for the 2025 grazing season. These instructions were developed with the participation of the livestock permittees on May 16, 2025. Those in attendance were:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>
1. <u>Rodney and Darla Johnson</u>	<u>Permittee (Rod and Darla Johnson)</u>
2. <u>Osborn Ranch Inc.</u>	<u>Permittee (Niel Osborn)</u>
3. <u>Mary Branstetter</u>	<u>Permittee (Mary Branstetter)</u>
4. <u>Dana Harris</u>	<u>New Meadows District Ranger</u>
5. <u>Brian McMorris</u>	<u>Range Specialist</u>

<u>PERMITTEE</u>	<u>PERMITTED NUMBERS / SEASON</u>	<u>2025 AUTHORIZED NUMBERS / SEASON</u>
Osborn Ranch	343 cow/calf 6/1- 9/30	310 cow/calf 7/1 – 9/30
Rodney & Darla Johnson	341 cow/calf 6/1- 9/30	307 cow/calf 6/1 – 9/30
Mary Branstetter	44 cow/calf 6/1- 9/30	44 cow/calf 6/1 – 9/30

All cattle on the Meadows Valley C&H allotment should be branded with  or  brands.

The AOI is viewed by the Forest Service as instructions issued for implementing the term grazing permit and as such is part of the permit. This AOI is made part of the term grazing permit consistent with Part 1, item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a). Situations may develop during the grazing season which requires changes to these instructions. If changes become necessary, or if the permittee cannot comply with some part of these instructions, please contact the appropriate District Ranger and obtain approval before initiating changes or deviating from these instructions. Refer to Part 2 of the term grazing permit for general terms and conditions that apply to these operating instructions. Failure to comply with the AOI direction is a violation of the grazing permit and will be resolved following agency procedures established in regulation, manuals and handbooks.

The permittee shall notify the District Ranger five (5) days prior to the date and location of entry of livestock onto National Forest system lands. An “on” count may be done at this time. We will notify you if we will be there to count you on.

Grazing fee of \$1.35/head month must be paid before livestock are authorized to go on the lands administered by the National Forest. This bill is due five (5) days prior to your earliest turnout date. The New Meadows District Office must receive confirmation from Lockbox that payment has been made prior to cattle entering the Forest. **Please do not wait to pay your bill as it may take additional time for checks to clear. We recommend paying online. The web address for payment of the grazing bill on-line is located in the upper right-hand corner of your bill.**

TERMS AND CONDITIONS PERTAINING TO SEASON OF USE AND LIVESTOCK NUMBERS

The grazing prescriptions are designed to meet the resource needs of the soils and vegetation. Fisheries biologists have completed Biological Assessments on this grazing activity for Chinook salmon, steelhead trout and bull trout (species listed under the Endangered Species Act). Any known and/or potential effects of livestock grazing on the fish species have been mitigated.

The District Ranger may modify the season of use and livestock numbers permitted on any given year. The season of use is dependent upon weather conditions (annual precipitation and temperature) which influences annual forage production and range readiness. The District Ranger's authority to modify permitted grazing use is further described in Part 2, Section 8 (c) of your term grazing permit.

Turnout will not occur prior to range readiness. Range readiness is measured by soil moisture and plant growth. Soils may be damp, but not saturated, and should be firm to avoid excessive compaction due to livestock. Grass species other than bulbous bluegrass and cheatgrass must be a minimum of 6 inches in height and out of the boot stage. Arrowleaf balsamroot should be in bloom or past bloom.

In accordance with Forest Service Manual (FSM) 2255.1 all grazing permittees are required to conform to livestock laws and quarantine regulations of the State and Secretary of Agriculture while their livestock are on Forest Service administered land. Forest officers shall not allow livestock under quarantine to enter Forest Service administered lands until the quarantine is lifted or until the hold order is released. Grazing permits may be suspended or cancelled, in accordance with FSM 2204, for failure to comply with such laws or with any approved special rules of a recognized livestock association.

Livestock Rotations and Allowable Use/Mitigation Measures

As allowable use grazing criteria and mitigation measures are reached, livestock are moved to the next grazing Unit or off Forest Service Administered Lands.

2025 Grazing Rotation

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Prescription</u>	<u>Allowable Use/Mitigation Measures</u>
Meadows Slope Unit	Turnout 6/1 or at Range readiness	40% allowable use on upland vegetation. 4" stubble height on hydric greenline species or 45% use in riparian areas.
Ecks Flat Unit	Not used in 2025	(Same as Meadows Slope Unit)
Goose Lake Unit/ Corral Creek Unit	Use after flowering	50% allowable use on upland vegetation. 4" stubble height on hydric greenline species or 45% allowable use in riparian areas

Meadows Slope/Ecks Flat Units

Cattle will be turned out in two areas. Osborn Ranch will not turnout in the Ecks Flat Unit this year and wait to turnout in the Goose Lake Unit. Branstetter and Johnson will turnout in the Meadows Slope Unit. Monitoring of these units will occur several weeks after turnout. Once allowable use is reached livestock will be moved into the Goose Lake Unit.

Goose Lake Unit/Corral Creek Unit

This unit will be monitored after the livestock enter the unit. This unit will be used with the Corral Creek Unit again this year. Once allowable use is met (or September 30, whichever is sooner), livestock will need to be removed from Forest Service administered lands. Osborn Ranch will turn out here and join Branstetter and Johnson.

Monitoring and Allowable Use Results

The following allowable use criteria and mitigation measures are to be followed for all grazing activities. There will be Forest Service personal monitoring these standards throughout the grazing season along with any long-term vegetation monitoring that may be collected this grazing season. When annual use is collected there needs to be about a 10% allowance on either side of the mean percent utilization to account for error and/or bias.

There was nothing in 2024 that was recorded above standards.

Other Requirements

If livestock are found dead on the allotment you will be responsible to move the carcasses 100 yards away from recreation trails, roads, or live water.

Salt placement is required to be at least ¼ mile from a riparian plant community, should be located ¼ mile from timber plantations until the trees have grown to a size that reduces their susceptibility to damage from livestock, and 100 feet off roads, where possible. If this can't be accomplished, the New Meadows District range personnel will work with you to find acceptable locations. All salt blocks shall be removed when livestock have been moved out of a unit or off National Forest.

Livestock Trailing Instructions/Livestock Shipping Instructions

Livestock are trailed/trucked onto the allotment from adjacent private land or trucked to the authorized grazing Unit. All livestock are trailed off the allotment onto adjacent private lands through the Goose Creek and Meadows Slope Units.

MAINTENANCE OF RANGE IMPROVEMENTS

All range improvements must be maintained to standard prior to turning livestock into the Unit scheduled for use. If an existing range improvement has been properly maintained but requires reconstruction, a cooperative effort can be made between the Forest Service and permittee to reconstruct the development depending on funding. The permittee is required to provide the materials and labor during routine maintenance.

Maintenance of spring developments is vitally important to the health of your livestock and to the grazing allotment. If you are aware of spring developments that need reconstruction or extensive maintenance, please discuss this with the Forest Service. All water developments which utilize a storage tank must have a wildlife escape ramp installed and maintained.

The permittees will be allowed to go off trail to salt and maintain range improvements. When salting they will be allowed 2 times (once to put it out and once to gather unused salt). When working on range improvements they will be allowed 4 times throughout the year to put up, maintain, and take down. If more times are needed to drive off road you will need to notify the District Ranger, and they will make a decision on a case by case bases.

MONITORING OF THE ANNUAL LIVESTOCK GRAZING ACTIVITY

We are requesting you to report actual use information for each unit grazed. Forms may be completed by each individual permittee or one form can be completed by the group. However, a form should be completed for each unit grazed by livestock. If you have any questions about completing the form, please call the Range Department at the Forest Service at (208) 347-0300. We request the forms be returned no later than the 2026 AOI meeting.

MULTIPLE USE REQUIREMENTS

There is spring and fall prescribe burning planned on Meadows Slope above Hwy 55. Also from Goose Creek to the Goose Lake road. The Ecks Flat, Moorhead Flat and Rock Flat are may see burning as well in the fall.

Thorny Goose (Last Chance to Thorn Creek) skid trail decom no logging.

Granite Goose project is in the planning phase and is currently next to the allotment. The project boundary is roughly from Brundage Ski Hill east to State Land. This includes looking at a variety of activities like timber harvest, thinning, burning, watershed restoration, and recreation. We encourage you to be involved with this project.

If there is damage to Forest System trails by the permittees' livestock the permittees will need to repair it or pay for it to be repaired.

There may be recreation event permits applied for throughout the year and we will work with you on any that are on your allotment.

Clow Point is scheduled to finish being cleaned up this year.

SPECIAL MANAGEMENT

In the event a designated mitigation measure fails to protect a species listed under the Endangered Species Act, a change in authorized grazing activity will occur. If proper use

grazing levels are reached, then livestock are to be moved to the next grazing unit or off of the allotment. If livestock grazing does not comply with the terms and conditions of these Annual Operating Instructions, then Forest Service policy and procedures regarding administrative permit actions will be followed.

Other Species listed are Whitebark Pine was listed as threatened December of 2022 and Wolverine was listed threatened January 2024. If you stay within allowable use standards in these areas currently no further mitigation is needed.

Invasive weeds are becoming a serious threat to the welfare of rangelands. The Forest Service asks the permittee to provide assistance in identifying new weed infestations and to help prevent the establishment of weeds on the forest. Please pay particular attention to areas where stock is concentrated such as loading/unloading areas, water developments, and salting areas. The Payette National Forest has a requirement that any hay (non-pelletized), straw or mulch that is brought onto the National Forest be certified weed free. All livestock entering the National Forest are recommended to be fed Certified Weed Free Forage for at least 2 days prior to entering the Forest.

If there is a wildfire on your allotment, we will work with you and try to provide as many updates as possible. Please work with your local district office who will be working closely with any fire teams. Make sure you have a plan if a wildfire happens on or near your allotment.

The Forest Service will work with you within our rules and regulations during exceptionally dry years. Allowable-use levels will continue to be used to trigger livestock movements or removal. Contingency plans need to be made for your livestock, should utilization levels require removal of livestock prior to the end of your permitted grazing season. Please work closely with your assigned rangeland management specialist as you make decisions for your operation.

You are responsible for ensuring that your rider (if you elect to have one) is informed and understands the standards, guidelines, and other management direction in these instructions.

