



# *Small Farm Management Schedule*

## **A MONTHLY “TO DO” CHECKLIST**

### **JANUARY**

- Restrict livestock from wet pastures and surface water.
- Collect manure and store covered.
- Maintain gutters and downspouts on all buildings adjacent to animal areas.
- Hang nest boxes now for orchard mason bees and birds. Be sure birds have water available during freezes.
- Pre-order native plants by end of January from TCD

### **FEBRUARY**

- Sample soils to see what nutrients your pasture or fields will need later in the spring.
- Plan for plantings along surface waterways.
- If stored manure needs to be exported off-farm, make arrangements this month. Most often, gardeners are looking for manure for their fields.
- Pull weeds while they are young.
- Clean out old bird nest boxes. Assess wildlife habitat to see if additional plantings will improve the habitat

### **MARCH**

- Restrict livestock access to surface water, well, & septic drain fields.
- Plant native plants.
- Cut or mow weeds when buds appear.
- Apply first fertilizer application (35% of total).

## APRIL

- Apply fertilizer or spread composted manure if soil is not saturated. Apply 35% of total amount recommended by soil tests.
- Reseed or over-seed pastures.
- Reseed confinement areas.
- Pull weeds now while they are still small.
- Seed forest edges and lanes with clover and cereal grains for pheasants, grouse, and quail.
- Prepare and start spring grazing if the soil is no longer saturated and grass height is at least 6”.

## MAY

- Rotate pastures when grass height is down to 3” and don’t allow livestock back on until grass is at least 6”. Mow pastures after grazing to ensure the height of all plants is 3-6” and to prevent weeds from going to seed.
- Spread manure by dragging pastures to evenly distribute manure.
- Apply 40% of annual fertilizer required by pastures.
- Plant vegetation along fence lines for a wildlife corridor.

## JUNE

- Avoid under-grazing. Do not allow grass to “get ahead of livestock”. Mow pastures to prevent them from going to seed and losing nutritional value. Another option is to set aside some of the pasture for hay production.
- Continue weed pulling and mowing.
- Be sure wildlife has access to water.

## JULY

- Continue to rotate, drag, and clip pastures.
- Check for erosion where livestock congregate. Move feed, water and mineral blocks away from gates and shade to more evenly distribute livestock.
- Plan for winter confinement area and footings.
- Weed control is imperative this month to keep them from going to seed.
- Leave crop residue along fence lines or in pasture corners for birds to use as winter cover and food.

## AUGUST

- Avoid overgrazing this month when pasture production slows .
- Check for erosion. Do not feed animals hay or grain on the ground especially this month when soil is dry. They will create bare spots where weeds will invade. And horses can get sand colic from ingesting dirt in their feed.
- Plan for reseeding. Order seed, lime, and fertilizer and reserve equipment now to avoid the September rush.
- Prepare winter manure storage bins.
- Be sure wildlife has access to water. Put out elevated shallow trays for birds.

## SEPTEMBER

- Drag pastures before winter to distribute manure before rains
- Apply remaining 25% of annual pasture fertilizer needs.
- Restrict livestock from pastures if the soil becomes saturated.
- Reseed in mid to late month.
- Check for trees with falling leaves that may be toxic. Common trees poisonous to livestock are yew, black locust, cherry, horse chestnut, red maple, and oak.
- Cut blackberries now to prevent nutrient storage in the roots.
- Leave corn and other grain crop residues in the garden for wildlife.

## OCTOBER

- Restrict livestock from pastures when soil is saturated. Prevent nutrient runoff from manure into surface water with at least a 10' buffer of vegetation.
- Cover stored manure. Gather outside manure at least twice a week to prevent nutrient runoff. Store undercover at least 100' from any well, stream and/or wetland to prevent water contamination.
- Install or check existing gutters and downspouts on building adjacent to live- stock holding facilities.
- Check and maintain winter holding areas and/or paddocks.

## NOVEMBER

- Restrict livestock from pastures when soil is saturated.
- Store manure covered.
- Check and maintain winter holding areas and/or paddocks.
- Maintain gutters and downspouts on all buildings adjacent to animal areas.
- Pile fallen limbs and branches from winter storms to create brush piles for wildlife habitat.

## DECEMBER

- Restrict livestock from pastures when soil is saturated. Protect wetlands from livestock access to prevent damage to wetland functions and habitat.
- Store manure covered.
- Be sure wildlife has access to water in freezing weather.
- Check and maintain winter holding areas and/or paddocks.

