GOLD NUGGET

Understand Natural Cycles And Work With Animals To Cut your Work and Speed Up The Process Of Regeneration

Animals Are Essential for Land Regeneration

Ultimately, the symbiotic relationship formed by the many animals on the farm does more than protect each species from pests. It is a foundational part of regenerative land management. You'd be hard-pressed to gain the same benefits without them. At best, it would be far more labor intensive, as the animals perform many of the functions you'd otherwise have to do by hand or with machines.

The animals' hooves break up hardened soils and trod their own faeces and urine into the soil. To get the animals to cover and "treat" the entire 220 acres, one way to entice the cattle to move across the land is to place the hay at one end and the water at the other.

This helps maximize the impact of their hooves on the land, and helps distribute the waste (manure and urine) more evenly across the property. Now and then they also move the feed in order to encourage the animals to take a different path. In short, the idea is to imitate nature as much as possible, which includes the migration of wild herds across the land.

Pastures will ultimately become a mix of perennial grasses. Perennials grow taproots that are nearly 8 feet long — much deeper than annuals. These long taproots help nourish the soil microbiome, which need the plant interaction. Shallow-rooted annuals are mixed in to increase diversity, but perennials are the long-term solution that allows the land to turn into a true savannah.

Working With Natural Cycles Improves Productivity

To adopt this kind of system you do need to understand how the various cycles work, such as the energy, carbon and water cycles. Otherwise you might fail to manage the process properly. For example, in the:

•**Energy cycle**, photosynthesis produces grass that feeds the cows. When sunlight hits bare earth, it's of no use, so planting cover crops is key.
•**Carbon cycle,** the grass covering can be likened to photosynthesizing tissue that breathes in carbon dioxide, sequestering it in the ground, and breathes out oxygen, which is critical for animal and human life. By sequestering carbon in the soil where it's needed, the plants help remove excess carbon dioxide from the air where it does harm.
•**Water cycle,** the quality of the soil makes a big difference. When the soil is hard and degraded, any rain that falls simply runs off and takes topsoil with it. When the soil quality is good, with high amounts of organic matter, it soaks up the water like a sponge. That not only helps retain water, but also the topsoil. In short, healthier soils are part of the solution to reduce water consumption in agriculture. At present, agriculture uses up about 70 percent of the world's fresh water, making conventional farming a significant contributor to looming water shortages. Regenerative agriculture can significantly reduce the world's water needs.

These are complex cycles, and there are cycles within cycles that work in a symbiotic fashion. But once you get it right, you can rebuild soil quality at a very efficient rate. Gabe Brown, for example, is creating healthy topsoil hundreds if not thousands of times quicker than it would occur in nature simply by working with and optimizing these natural cycles

Farming Secrets says: Knowledge Is A Powerful Tool in Making Steps To Change

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