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## Sustainable Agricultural Livelihood Restoration, Rehabilitation and Resilience in Kenya Training Manual

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### 2.5.3 SUB-MODULE 3: HOLISTIC PLANNED GRAZING FOR RANGE IMPROVEMENT

This is a concept developed in the 1960s by a range scientist, Allan Savory. It is a strategy for regenerating degraded areas while utilising ecologically, socially, and economically sound activities. It is similar to rotational grazing but recognizes four ecosystem processes, namely, water cycle, nutrient cycle, energy flow, and community dynamics. It is cost-effective, uses a nature-based solutions and is highly scalable. It is sustainable because it increases land productivity, livestock stocking rates while ensuring the wellbeing of the community.

It is based on the hypothesis that domestic livestock can substitute for wild animal herds that previously utilised the natural vegetation sustainably. These natural herds of wildlife grazed, defecated, stomped, and salivated as they moved around, building soil and deepening plant roots.

#### Approaches and principles of holistic management

- Understand the environment you are managing
- Animal impact as a tool - livestock can improve land health
- Grazing as a tool
- Seasonal planning - time is key
- Big picture consideration – nature functions as a whole- wildlife, livestock, plants, soils, people etc

Eight commonly used tools are money/labour, human creativity, grazing, animal impact, fire, rest, living organisms, and technical knowledge

- Set a goal for what one wants the land to look like (covered ground, good healthy plants, many vegetation types, rivers flowing and others), and how the community wants to work together (who is involved, their roles, how will they organise themselves, plus others)
- Control use of the area
- Divide the area into grazing blocks (as many as possible)
- Only one block to be used by all herds at any one time.
- Calculate the number of days the herds will spend in each block
- Available forage in each block (for dry season)
- How much land is to be grazed and how many times (for wet season)
- Decide the sequence the herds will move through the blocks.
- If possible, combine as many livestock types together
- Graze a different section of the used block each day.
- Do not come back into a block before the grass has recovered.
- Monitor one's animals and soil impact daily, monitor one's land every 6-12 months



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### ***Benefits of holistic management***

- Increased ground cover
- Increased water infiltration and retention of soil moisture in the soil
- Increased organic matter
- Reducing erosion
- Improved wildlife habitat and healing the environment

### ***Critique of holistic planned grazing***

The principle does stand without its own critiques though. It is alleged and commonly known that many animals congregating in one area lead to a lot of degradation. Soils in arid and semi-arid areas are known to be fragile and the rainfall highly variable. As a result, there is a possibility that some of the ecological processes may not work effectively as anticipated.