

GRASSLAND EVALUATION PROGRAM

The goal of the Grassland Evaluation Program is to teach decision-making skills to 4-H and other youth in the area of grassland resource management.

The objectives are to develop a 4-H contest that integrates the areas of pastures, livestock, soils, wildlife, and plant identification, and to teach students an overall awareness of proper grassland management.

Target Age: 9–18 years (open to Junior and Senior teams)

The program consists of four parts: Grassland Condition, Wildlife Habitat Appraisal, Soil Evaluation, and Plant Identification. A field site is chosen in a grazed pasture. A 50'x50' area will be marked in the field as the subject of certain questions which must be answered.

Grassland Condition

Students are given a hypothetical farm scenario with cattle and pasture production for spring, summer, fall, and winter. The student must then evaluate the pasture area marked in the field, interpret soil test results, animal forage requirements, and pasture forage production, and determine if forage production meets animal needs. Corrective decisions must be made to solve production problems based on the information provided.

Wildlife Habitat Appraisal

The student is asked to complete a set of questions pertaining to wildlife habitats and pastures. The student must also assess the suitability of the pasture site as a wildlife habitat for bobwhite quail and cottontail rabbit.

Soil Evaluation

The student is asked to locate the contest site on an aerial photograph from a soil survey map. The correct soil description for that site must be determined from the survey information, and the description must be interpreted to answer questions for that soil and site. Suitability of that soil for specific forage species must also be assessed.

Plant Identification

The student must identify selected live weed and forage species correctly, and give the correct life cycle for each plant.

Scoring

Teams consist of four members. The top three scores are counted. The top five teams will be eligible to attend the Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest in Missouri. Out-of-state trip expenses will be covered if funding is available.