

## CONTRACT GRAZING: THINGS TO CONSIDER AND DISCUSS

- Consider whether or not your property is suitable for grazing. Mechanical vegetation control methods might be more cost efficient and effective on small, level parcels that don't contain a lot of rocks.
- As a property owner, you should know what your goal is for having your property grazed (e.g., to reduce the overall fuel load by 'x' percent, to create a fire break, to reduce or eradicate invasive plant species).
- Potential grazing service providers will need an on-site tour and evaluation. No reputable provider will take a job without seeing the site.
- Be prepared to describe the site and provide maps so the contractor clearly understands the boundaries and other important characteristics. Lack of such information can hamper the service provider's ability to accomplish the objectives, cause bad relations, and even create liability.
- Identify what water sources, if any, are available for the animals. Service provider's should have water-hauling capability (whether drawing water from on or off the grazing site) but they are likely to charge more if water has to be brought in versus being able to connect to a garden hose.
- Consider how the service provider will access the grazing site for loading and unloading animals and equipment.
- It's in the best interest of both parties to have a written contract spelling out what the property owner's responsibilities are and what the service provider's responsibilities are. The contract should stipulate who is responsible for losses incurred by the service provider in the event of animal or equipment theft. Also, nonrefundable setup and delivery fees are often specified in grazing contracts, usually in the form of a down payment, so a payment schedule should be clearly outlined.
- Reputable service providers will have a business license and carry liability insurance.
- Request and check references, just as you would when dealing with any other contractor.
- While they may share many common practices, each service provider is unique and may have a slightly different approach to their work. By asking questions you'll learn about their particular style and experience, which can help determine which provider is right for you.
- Weather, climate, condition of vegetation, time of year, desired outcome and prior commitments are just some of the things grazing service providers have to consider when determining a time frame for your project, so try to be flexible. They also need time to assemble livestock, equipment and qualified herders (if necessary) and will do so only after a contract has been signed.
- To eliminate surprise and help avoid conflict, nearby property owners should be informed that animals will be grazing your property.
- Discuss how the animals will be contained in the grazing area – will electric fencing be used, and if so, how will it impact neighbors and pedestrians? If there's no access to electricity at the grazing site, will the service provider use solar or battery powered fencing?
- Discuss how the animals will be protected – will guardian animals be used, and if so, what kind?
- Discuss whether or not a herdsman will be onsite with the animals at all times or how often the herd will be checked. If a herdsman won't be on site, discuss what should happen in the event an animal gets out of the grazing area.

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Note: This list was compiled by City staff for your convenience and is not an exhaustive list. You should discuss your specific grazing needs with perspective contractors along with any other general considerations important to you before deciding who to hire for your job.

01/22/2009