



# Grazier

► by Kindra Gordon

## Free Range on the Web

Get your grazing management questions answered at these top-notch Web sites.

*Fencing ideas. Forage research. Weed control. If you've got questions relating to these and other range and pasture topics, there's plenty of information on the Internet. The problem is that finding information can often be akin to locating a needle in a haystack.*

### Assistance

Fortunately, having a road map can help guide you to the best sites available. After a great deal of surfing the Internet, I've whittled down my list of favorite forage sites. Here's the cream of the crop:

**Rangelands of the Western United States** ([www.rangelandswest.org](http://www.rangelandswest.org)) — For livestock producers in the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and westward, this site is a gold mine. The site is a collaborative effort of land-grant universities in 17 Western states. It includes detailed definitions and terminology about rangelands, articles about current rangeland policy issues, and an education page with several useful ideas.

### Web addresses for easy reference on grazing management:

[www.rangelandswest.org](http://www.rangelandswest.org)  
[www.noble.org](http://www.noble.org)  
<http://forages.orst.edu/default.cfm>  
[www.dowagro.com/theranch/](http://www.dowagro.com/theranch/)  
<http://aes.missouri.edu/fsrc/>  
[www.agr.okstate.edu/forage/publications/forage-pubs.htm](http://www.agr.okstate.edu/forage/publications/forage-pubs.htm)  
[www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/uwforage/uwforage.htm](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/uwforage/uwforage.htm)  
[www.oznet.ksu.edu/pr\\_forage/](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/pr_forage/)  
[www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/forage/](http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/forage/)  
[www2.msstate.edu/~dlang/foragesms.html](http://www2.msstate.edu/~dlang/foragesms.html)  
[www.pasturemanagement.com](http://www.pasturemanagement.com)  
[www.forage.com](http://www.forage.com)  
[www.holisticmanagement.org](http://www.holisticmanagement.org)  
[www.attra.org](http://www.attra.org)  
[www.hayandforage.com](http://www.hayandforage.com)  
[www.grassland.unl.edu](http://www.grassland.unl.edu)  
[www.rangelands.org](http://www.rangelands.org)  
[www.glci.org](http://www.glci.org)  
[www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/glti/homepage.html](http://www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/glti/homepage.html)  
[www.afgc.org](http://www.afgc.org)

Best of all, under "general resources" the comprehensive site includes forage-related publications from the Extension service, links to each of the participating state land-grant universities, as well as links to forage experts by state.

### Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation

([www.noble.org](http://www.noble.org)) — The Noble Foundation is a well-known authority on range and pasture research as well as on beef production and ag economics topics. You'll find all that information and more by clicking on the "ag division" box at the bottom of their home page. An added bonus to this site is the best plant image gallery on the Web. It includes color photos and detailed information on hundreds of range plants, forages and forbs.

### Forage Information Systems

(<http://forages.orst.edu/default.cfm>) — This site includes so much data, it's easy to feel overwhelmed at first. Navigate through it and it should yield the information you're looking for. The site is maintained by Oregon State University, but it includes information and links about hay, pasture and even silage across the United States.

My favorite feature is the site's searchable database. This allows you to type in the name of a specific forage or topic and it will pinpoint the information for you. Also, this is one of the only sites I've found with an in-depth list of vendors by category (seed, hay, fertilizer, fencing, etc.).

### The Ranch

([www.dowagro.com/theranch/](http://www.dowagro.com/theranch/)) — Operated by Dow AgroSciences, this site includes the most comprehensive database of weeds and management strategies available for range and pasture settings. The pull-down menus allow you to select the weed you want information on, then shows a picture, offers

a description of the plant and offers application rates for chemical control.

### Forage System Research Center

(<http://aes.missouri.edu/fsrc/>) — For producers in the central and eastern part of the country, this site has a long list of publications in downloadable pdf format. The site is coordinated by the University of Missouri's research center at Linneus and offers some of the most practical information available.

Other states with useful listings of forage research publications include:

### Oklahoma Forage Extension Publications

[www.agr.okstate.edu/forage/publications/forage-pubs.htm](http://www.agr.okstate.edu/forage/publications/forage-pubs.htm)

### University of Wisconsin Forages

[www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/uwforage/uwforage.htm](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/uwforage/uwforage.htm)

### Kansas Forage Web Site

[www.oznet.ksu.edu/pr\\_forage/](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/pr_forage/)

### Purdue Forage Information

[www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/forages/](http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/forages/)

### Mississippi State University

[www2.msstate.edu/~dlang/foragesms.html](http://www2.msstate.edu/~dlang/foragesms.html)

Outside of the standard university related sites, there are a few nontraditional sites with useful and unique information.

### Pasture Management

([www.pasturemanagement.com](http://www.pasturemanagement.com)) — This is a commonsense, how-to Web site with good suggestions for managing land and people. The information is provided by Montana-based consultant Wayne Bureson, who draws on real-life experiences. The useful site covers no-nonsense topics like "7 principles to a healthy pasture" and "21 common mistakes to avoid when building a fence."

### Morgan's Forage Site ([www.forage.com](http://www.forage.com))

— Maintained by the Morgan Consulting Group, this site focuses on the economics of hay production, hay supplies and price trends.

### Allan Savory Center for Holistic Management ([www.holisticmanagement.org](http://www.holisticmanagement.org))

— For those interested in a sustainable management approach toward the entire ranch, this is your resource. A highlight of this site is the "library" that includes a lengthy list of articles about holistic management.

### Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas ([www.attra.org](http://www.attra.org))

— This site provides fodder for "out-of-the-box" thinkers. The information is geared toward sustainable farming practices, alternative crop and livestock enterprises, and innovative

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marketing. If you are looking for new ideas, this is the place.

**Hay & Forage Grower magazine**

([www.hayandforage.com](http://www.hayandforage.com)) — This magazine is produced six times per year and is primarily geared toward alfalfa growers, but it's a valuable resource for forage information nonetheless. Online, you can register to receive the magazine, or read articles (including back issues) on the Web. The site also provides good links to other hay sites and is updated regularly with forage news, research and coming events.

Lastly, there are several organizations dedicated to providing grazing management

information to producers. While these sites don't provide an abundance of content, they can be a useful resource to contact for more information about specific topics or to learn about upcoming educational workshops. They include:

**Center for Grassland Studies**

[www.grassland.unl.edu](http://www.grassland.unl.edu)

**Society for Range Management**

[www.rangelands.org](http://www.rangelands.org)

**Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative**

[www.glci.org](http://www.glci.org)

**Grazing Lands Technology Institute**

(operated by the Natural Resources Conservation Service)

[www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/glti/homepage.html](http://www.ftw.nrcs.usda.gov/glti/homepage.html)

**American Forage and Grassland Council**

[www.afgc.org](http://www.afgc.org)

**Some final tips when surfing these and other sites:**

Often the "research" or "publication" button on a Web site's home page will take you to the most useful information.

Always check out a site's "links" button. Links can often take you to exactly the information you were seeking, or provide more detailed information specific to your region of the country.

Most Web sites include contact information for staff members or experts in a certain field. If you can't find the answers you are looking for, by all means call or e-mail them. 

**Editor's Note:** *Kindra Gordon is a freelance writer based in South Dakota. She has a master's degree in range management from the University of Idaho and is an active member of the Society for Range Management.*