

McKeon and Henny Penny Farm 2016 to present and looking forward

August 9, 2021



Stagecoach 2

**June 26, 2016, the end of
my first month at McKeon**

**Over 1 month of grazing 5
cows, 6 ewes, 8 lambs, and 2
very young llamas**



July 7, 2021

**Field was divided into 13 pastures;
daily moves. 120lb of custom annual
seed mix (\$375) (based on Ray's Crazy
Summer Mix) trampled into this field by
the sheep in early June.**

**This is a couple weeks after grazing
and new seedlings are emerging**

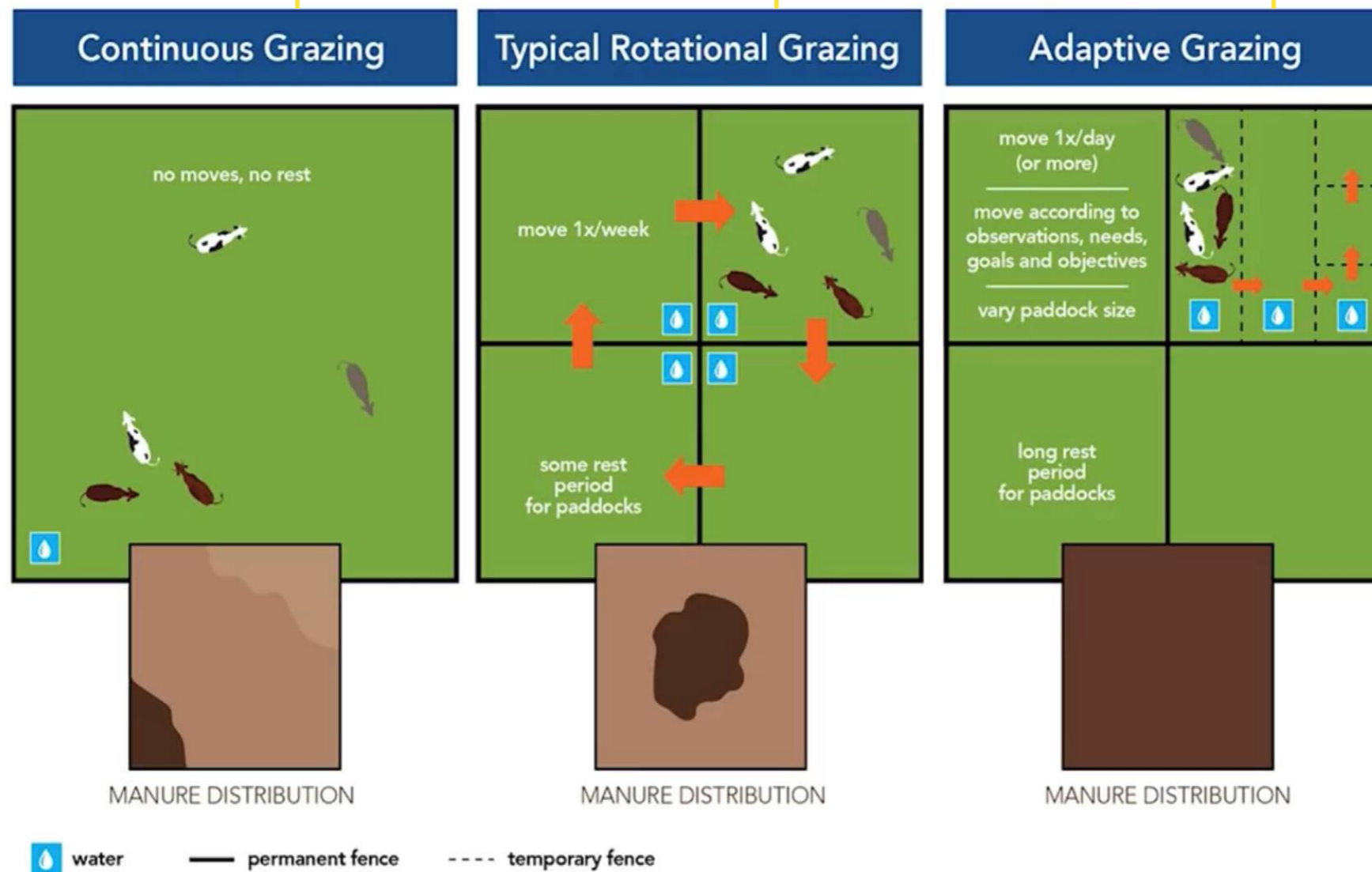


**Winter Waste Hay area in
early Summer after
planting Ray's Crazy Mix**

2021 Adaptive Grazing

2017 Rotational Grazing

Prior to 2017 Continuous Grazing



Soil is Key



- Environmental stewardship begins within the soil
- SOIL is the essential building block to facilitate DIVERSITY of FLORA and FAUNA.
- Adaptive Grazing mimics the big herds of bison and other ruminants that would pass through our grasslands
- Adaptive Grazing has the power to:
 - improve water percolation and infiltration
 - increase carbon-holding capacity of soil
 - increase biological diversity of soil
- As Jim Hyde, the State Agronomist, stated when he came to see the work we have done, manure management like this can be “an amazing thing.”

Monetary Value Added to McKeon since 2016

- recipient of TWO EQIP grants from the USDA-NRCS to install the well, install pipeline to provide water to 4 fields, forage/biomass seeding totaling **\$15,000**. These grants cover 75% of the estimated project cost. Henny Penny Farm contributed over **\$5000** to the projects
- pay for electric at McKeon which is \$45/month (this is base cost even with no electrical usage) (averaging **\$410/year** for 8 months incl. shut down/turn on fee)
- donated 2 gates and their installation to the main driveway of McKeon in 2020 (estimated value **\$500**)
- general upkeep (eg. replacement of GCFI outlets when broken; 2020 \$200 for 4 outlets)
- 2021 planted annual seeds for soil improvement in Stagecoach 1 and 2 totaling **\$550**

Total to Date: at least \$22,890.00

Monetary Value Added Going forward

- Cautiously optimistic Henny Penny will be receiving a USDA CSP Grant to cover the next 5 years for a total of **\$20,962.00** to continue our grazing within a plan of environmental stewardship (including trees/shrubs for wildlife food/habitat along south side Stagecoach 2 and south side Ridgebury 1)
- June 7, 2021 my application was ranked #2 in the state (based on our excellent environmental stewardship) and they are expecting all applicants to be granted this round

Community Value Added

- Henny Penny Summer Internship program for rising seniors and college age students
- Provided high school internship positions for Ridgefield and Bethel high schools since 2015 and a Veterinary student internship for Glasgow University in 2021
- The number of visitors to McKeon Farm since the addition of sheep and llamas has increased tremendously. In 2016 we would see no one except one neighbor. Now, people are coming everyday to take a moment to enjoy the pastoral scene, either from their car or on foot.
- Countless community members tell us how they stop on their daily journeys to say hi to the sheep and llamas and then they come visit them at the home farm in the winter, to see the complete cycle of farm and food

A New 5-year lease (2022-2027)

- The general guideline considered conservative by the USDA is 1000lb of animal per acre or 1AU/Acre.
- My adult sheep weigh 160lb. The lambs by August reach an average of 55lb. The rams weigh 200 lb on average. We end up with a herd size shy of 8000lb over 16 acres, half of the 16,000lb one could graze on that acreage.
- I am proposing to continue with **a new 5-year lease with an upper limit of 85 sheep**. That is an increase from our current 70 sheep and allows just a bit of wiggle room down the line in case of the incidence of more twins or triplets during lambing.
- And under USDA-NRCS grants, all of our grazing is under inspection so we are regularly monitored by experts in the field.
- **For 2022, our lambing and flock is going to look much like this year.**

Birds of Special Concern

Regarding any birds of special concern, the Conservation Commission will be responsible to contact Whitney Freeman at Henny Penny Farm if a bird of special concern is spotted so that she may contact the USDA-NRCS immediately for any grazing changes that might be suggested. All reasonable efforts will be made to support the bird populations, following the USDA-NRCS's guidance.

Conclusion

Since 2016, Henny Penny Farm has made significant contributions to McKeon and our community through environmental stewardship guided by the USDA, monetary funds and internship programs.

In the next 5 years we hope to build upon these early successes to increase our positive environmental impact with the help of significant USDA-NRCS funding as well as continue to provide unique and valuable hands-on education to young adults.