

Forestry and livestock production are mainstays of the natural resource based economies of North Central Idaho. There is also a strong tradition of livestock grazing in other

forests across the West. Silvopasture, the combination of forest management and improved forage species, is a more intensive, controlled application of this traditional use of livestock grazing and growing trees. Silvopasture is the deliberate introduction of timber into a forage production system, or vice-versa. With silvopasture, timber and pasture are managed as a single integrated system. It is not utilized as much in the West as it is in the Southeast, but is most often implemented to increase profitability, reduce risk, and augment environmental benefits from land management. Silvopasture systems are designed to produce high-value timber while providing short term cash flow from livestock.

The ability of recently forested land to grow trees can be predicted by the performance of the previous stand. How ever, the ability of pasture or rangeland to support commercial timber production is harder to predict. Many forage plants are more shallowly rooted than trees are, and a productive forage pasture may have soils that are too shallow to support commercial tree production. Since soils can change significantly over a short distance, the presence of trees near a proposed silvopasture is no guarantee of successful tree establishment and growth. Local University of Idaho Extension and Natural Resource Conservation Service offices are good sources of information about soil suitability for specific pasture and tree species.

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