

# Appendix I

## Guidelines for the Use of Yearling Conversion Factors

### Introduction

The use of conversion factors may be authorized when resource conditions and range management considerations warrant their use or when an operator requests the conversion.

Traditionally, an animal unit month (AUM) is defined as the amount of forage a 1,000 lb. cow and her calf up to 6 months of age consumes during the course of one month. It is widely accepted that an animal unit equivalent (AU) is considered to be one, one-thousandth the body weight of a grazing animal (i.e. BW/1000, or BW\*.001). For example, a 1,200 lb. cow would be 1.2 AU. Similarly, a 750 lb. yearling would be 0.75 AU (see discussions in Taylor and Field, 1999; Ensminger et al., 1990).

An adaptive management approach may be taken on any allotment by taking into account animal size when calculating AUM usage. Accounting for animal size reduces the need to adjust carrying capacity by more aptly accounting for differences in forage consumption from herds of differing livestock size. In other words, stocking rates can be more accurately aligned to carrying capacity.

### Conversion Guidelines

Conversion factors would function within the following framework:

1. Yearling cattle may be authorized for the same terms and conditions, including season of use and livestock numbers as customarily licensed for cow/calf pairs without special approval.
2. Conversion factors of less than 1:1 may be denied if the proposed use would result in a greater than customary percentage of the use being licensed during the growing season.
3. Yearling factors would be based on a pre-agreed to factor of .75 or the midweight of the yearlings for the period of time they are controlled by the applicant. This midweight would be determined as discussed below. If the management situation and conditions warrant, the average daily gain in the second and subsequent years may be calculated using the previous year's weight tickets. The calculation of the conversion factors would be the responsibility of the authorized officer and is not subject to negotiation by the lessee. It is the responsibility of the grazing operator to supply all weight tickets necessary to calculate the conversion factor or the conversion would be denied.
4. All yearling applications must be supported by current proof of control of the livestock to be grazed such as a bill of sale, cattle lease, or management agreement. This must be in conformance with 43 CFR 4130.7.
5. A monitoring plan would be in place to determine if adjustments to the conversion factor are required.
6. An environmental assessment (EA) would be done for all allotments where yearling conversion factors are requested. The EA would address any land use plan decisions for the allotment, the impact to the vegetation, wildlife, watershed, or other resource values as a result of a change in foraging habits and numbers of animals.
7. Other Policy Considerations:

- a. The term of the conversion must be for not less than a 3 year period.
  - b. If a grazing lease or permit is transferred the conversion may be allowed to remain in place under the same conditions.
  - c. No yearling conversions would be allowed for replacement heifers if run in common with cow-calf pairs.
  - d. No sheep or bison yearling conversions would be allowed.
  - e. The full fee shall be charged for each animal unit month of authorized grazing use in accordance with 43 CFR 4130.8-1(c).
8. Required Terms and Conditions of Permit/Lease:
- a. The allotment management plan (AMP), coordinated resource management plan (CRMP), management agreement or similar document guiding management of the grazing allotment would be made part of the lease/permit.
  - b. Any future monitoring which indicates that livestock use is resulting in resource damage or over use of the vegetation would require that the conversion factor be reviewed by the authorized officer.
  - c. The conversion factor may be terminated at any time at the discretion of the BLM after consultation with the grazing lessee.

## Determination of Yearling Conversion Factor

1. The beginning weight for yearling cattle must be determined prior to turning the animals into the allotment. This must be supported by certified weight tickets. The date for the weight tickets may be for any date, no more than two (2) weeks prior to turning yearlings into the allotment.
2. The midweight would be determined by using the following formula:

$$InWeight + \frac{Days * 2lbs}{2} = MidWeight$$

- \* Days refers to the total number of days yearling cattle are in the allotment.
  - \* 2 pounds is the assumed daily weight gain. This figure is administrative and is nonnegotiable, unless average daily gain can be calculated from actual certified weight tickets supplied by the lessee showing the turn in and take out weights of the yearling cattle.
  - \* Midweight would be rounded up to the nearest 50-pound increment.
3. The conversion factors are shown Table I.1.

<i>Midweight</i>	<i>Factor</i>
500	.60
550	.65
600	.70
650	.72
700	.75
750	.80
800	.85
850	.90
900	1.00

## References

- Ensminger, M.E., J.E. Oldfield, and W.W. Heinemann. 1990. Feeds and Nutrition Digest. The Ensminger Publishing Company. Clovis, CA.
- Kearl, W. Gordon. 1978. Mountain Valley Ranching in Wyoming. Department of Agriculture Economics University Wyoming AE 78-13 p. 24.
- Taylor, R.E., and T.G. Field. 1999. Beef Production and Management Decisions – Third Edition. Prentice Hall. Upper Saddle River, NJ.

