

Grazing and Burning Guidelines

Managing Grasslands for Biodiversity and Livestock Production

Applying grazing and burning best-practice principles in grasslands helps secure livelihoods, farm-scale livestock productivity, biodiversity and ecological infrastructure.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT ?

Fire and grazing management determine whether grassland ecosystems retain or lose their livestock productivity, biodiversity and ecological values.

The *Grazing and Burning Guidelines* provide best-practice principles that promote good grassland management, sensitive to the type of grassland and prevailing environmental conditions.

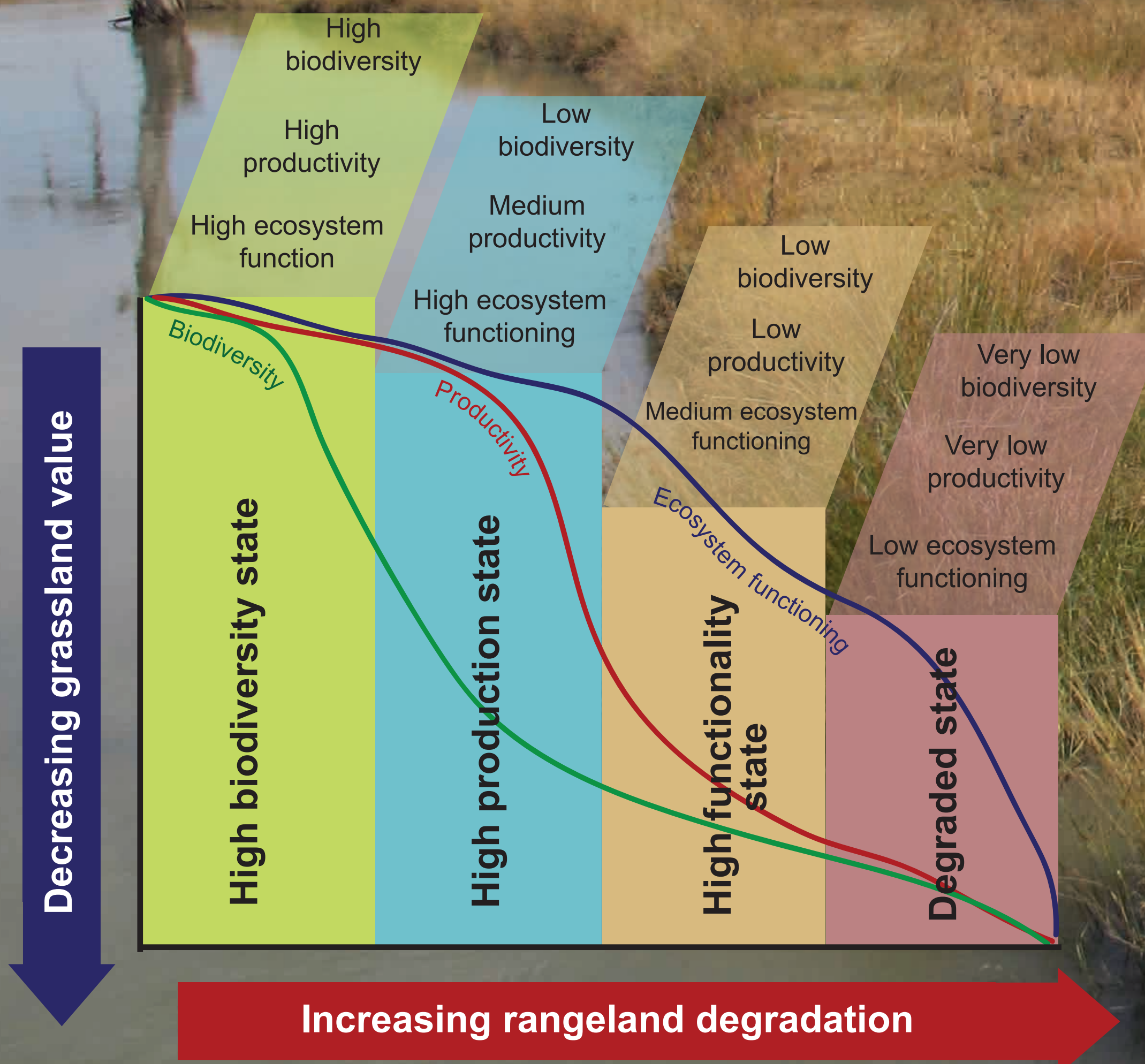
SOME EASY DO'S AND DON'TS

GRAZING

- ✓ Plan camps so that they enclose grassland areas of similar condition and grazing value.
- ✓ Rest all camps for a full growing season at least every five years.
- ✗ Never let livestock grazing exceed the carrying capacity of camps.
- ✗ Don't graze steeper slopes during wet periods.
- ✗ Don't allow cattle to form deep paths, especially into wetlands or rivers.
- ✗ Don't allow over- or selective-grazing, especially from sheep, in good condition grassland.

BURNING

- ✓ **Flexibility:** only burn a camp when there is good reason to do so, such as fire protection, moribund grass or bush control.
- ✓ **Variety:** increase the variety of habitat on the farm by burning camps under different weather conditions and at different times.
- ✓ **Frequency:** burn less frequently in drier seasons or areas.
- ✗ Don't burn in summer or late autumn for a late season green flush, or too frequently to increase short term carrying capacity.
- ✗ Don't burn camps in autumn to avoid burning firebreaks.
- ✗ Don't avoid burning by using only grazing or mowing, especially in mesic or coastal grassland.



This diagram shows how livestock productivity, biodiversity and ecosystem functioning change with management.

For more information, read the *Grazing and Burning Guidelines* available from the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) on the Resources page of www.grasslands.org.za; or contact k.nemutamvuni@sanbi.org.za

