

# ROTATIONAL GRAZING – VIRTUAL FENCING



The RDAR On-Farm Climate Action Fund (OFCAF) program supports the adoption and on-farm implementation of Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) that strengthen rotational grazing strategies for cattle by improving forage quality, increasing soil health, and enhancing resilience to changing climates.

OFCAF applicants may choose some or all of the other OFCAF BMPs related to Rotational Grazing, Cover Cropping or Nitrogen Management. Costs of multiple new BMPs within each of the three activity categories can be combined to a maximum grant payment of \$100,000 between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2028, from all OFCAF sources.

Rotational grazing BMPs rely on the following four principles of grazing management.

1. Balanced forage supply with livestock demand
2. Growing season rest
3. Avoidance of vulnerable periods
4. Planned animal distribution

Although these can differ between fields or farms based on terrain, composition, and water supplies, they must all be considered for effective implementation.

Water supply and distribution are critical factors in any rotational grazing system since water is essential for life, growth and reproduction. The quantity of water animals consume is affected by growth, pregnancy, lactation, activity, diet composition, and performance. Research indicates that when provided with high-quality water, livestock will drink more, eat more, and ultimately gain weight faster. Planning for reliable water supplies, such as water wells, dugouts, springs, and OFCAF-funded distribution systems (shallow water pipelines, remote watering systems, etc.), is as important as planning the fence locations for an efficient grazing system.

One of the main objectives of improved rotational grazing is to extend the grazing season into fall and, in some cases, winter. A properly managed grazing system can benefit poorer soils by providing nutrients and organic matter, thereby improving soil structure and health. Feed sampling, including forage testing, ensures a balanced diet and promotes good herd health, ensuring the animal's nutritional needs are met throughout the year based on the animal's production cycle (growth, pregnancy, lactation).

Your grazing management strategy will need to describe all of the components above. How are you addressing the four principles? How will you change your fencing to improve your grazing practice? What are your existing water sources, and how will you distribute the water to ensure that you have a reliable supply for your grazing? How may you improve your pasture composition to meet your livestock needs? What changes will you make to your movement of animals to increase the efficacy of your grazing system?

The BMPs supported by OFCAF must be new to your farm or field. Applicants may request funding to support eligible practices listed in the [OFCAF Program Guide](#). Please outline how you will apply these practices on your farm using the BMP Action Plan on page 4-5 of this form, including labelled maps that show legal land descriptions (LLDs), and field boundaries on an aerial photo or imagery. Any method of outlining and labelling can be used, as long as the fields are visible beneath. The [Guide to Locating and Labelling BMP Action Plans](#) provides further details. Your completed BMP Action Plan must be recommended by a qualified third-party adviser who is a Professional Agrologist (PAg) or Certified Crop Advisor (CCA); please reference the [Guide to Accessing Agricultural Recommendations in Alberta](#). Your BMP Action Plan must be approved in writing by RDAR to be eligible for OFCAF funding.

Please note: Invoices and proof of payment must be after April 1, 2026, and you must receive RDAR's written approval of your application. Paid invoices must include Legal Land Descriptions (LLDs) for approved project fields and proof of payment by November 30, 2026. Photographs with date stamps and GPS coordinates are required to document conditions before and after completing your project.

## GUIDELINES

**Virtual fence collars must apply to existing cattle. Virtual fence collars cannot be applied to future cattle stock.**

The Applicant is responsible for conducting due diligence to ensure compliance with industry standards regarding animal welfare.

- 1. Field perimeters must be securely fenced.** Note: OFCAF does fund perimeter fences.
- 2. Water distribution systems** – Water distribution must be part of a rotational grazing improvement and be eligible for OFCAF funding. Applications for watering systems alone will not be funded. The costs will not be reimbursed if the project is approved and invoices are submitted only for water systems. Costs include remote watering systems, shallow-water pipeline materials (maximum 2" diameter and less than 15" (38 cm) deep), custom installation, and equipment rental. Development of water sources such as new water wells, dugouts or spring developments, and deep, buried water lines are not eligible costs. **The OFCAF maximum is \$37,500 for eligible water distribution expenses from 2025 to 2028.**
- 3. New to Field** – The BMP must be new to the quarter section. Rotational Grazing BMPs funded by OFCAF on fields within the same quarter section are not considered new to the field.
- 4. Logistics** - A formal quote from either Gallagher (eShepherd) or Halter is required for your application. The quote should include proof of assessment for adequate cell service, or lack thereof (need for towers). Note that towers will not normally be approved for areas where adequate cell service is available.
- 5. Other** – Other costs include BMP action plan recommendations, technical assessments or engineered designs. Please describe using the "Other" box in the BMP Action Plan of the template below. The cost of a BMP Action Plan recommendation is up to 10% of the total cost of all eligible BMPs, to a maximum of \$2,000 per Applicant from 2022 to 2028.

## MAPPING REQUIREMENTS

The BMP Action Plan must include maps, aerial photos or images of existing conditions and the planned project, as shown in this example.

Include:

- Legal land description
- Field boundaries
- Water sources
- Existing perimeter and cross fences
- Proposed new paddocks. Note: It may not be feasible to describe all paddocks that will be created using virtual fence collars, but you must include a well-defined description of how you will use the virtual fence collars to improve your current forage management
- Significant variation in vegetation and/or topography may require a second map
- Water sources



Legend  
— existing perimeter fence  
— proposed virtual paddock moves  
• water source

**Example:** for NW-56-96-18-WX

## **ELIGIBLE COSTS**

- Virtual fence collars (neckbands)
- Towers where cell service is inadequate
- Watering systems that improve grazing management
- Remote waterers powered by renewable energy
- Shallow-buried water pipelines

## **INELIGIBLE COSTS**

- Perimeter fences
- Repair, maintenance, or upgrades to existing fences or gates
- Brush clearing
- Materials that are currently in farm inventory or not purchased from a recognized dealer
- Trailers
- Development of new water sources
- Watering lines greater than 2" (5 cm) in diameter and below 15" (38 cm) deep
- Solely limiting livestock access to the existing water
- Platforms such as RANGEVIEW (multi-use devices to display the virtual location of Virtual Fence collars that can reach beyond the project scope)
- Subscription fees

## **REPORTING – Must include:**

- Activation email from the virtual fencing company
- Photo of virtual fence collars on your cattle (date and GPS stamped), ideally with an identifiable person included
- Only activated virtual fence collars will be eligible for reimbursement

## ROTATIONAL GRAZING VIRTUAL FENCING - BMP ACTION PLAN

Please note: All costs must exclude GST. Use extra forms to add information and identify individual fields as needed.

<b>Applicant Name</b>								
<b>Type of Virtual Fence (VF)</b>			<b>VF Supplier</b>		<b># of Head for VF Project</b>			
<b>If you do not own the land, do you have permission from the landowner to install permanent structures (e.g. towers, base station)</b>					<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>		
<b>Is the BMP new to the field?</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Is the BMP new to the farm?</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	
<b>(A) VIRTUAL FENCING – Planned date (mo/yr):</b>								
<b>Field</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Materials and/ or installation</b>		<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Cost/Unit</b>	<b>Cost per Field</b>		
(LLD)	(ac)	(neckband or base station)			(\$/specify)	(\$)		
<b>Total</b>		<b>Cost of Virtual Fencing (A) \$</b>						
<b>(B) WATER DISTRIBUTION – Choose activity and provide planned date (mo/yr)</b>								
Note: \$37,500 OFCAF maximum for eligible expenses over 2025 - 2028								
<b>Remote water (Y/N):</b>		<b>Shallow pipelines (Y/N):</b>		<b>(C) Other (describe):</b>				
<b>Field</b>	<b>Area</b>	<b>Materials and/or installation</b>		<b>Quantity or Length</b>	<b>Cost/Unit</b>	<b>Cost per Field</b>		
(LLD)	(ac)	(describe)		(specify)	(\$/specify)	(\$)		
<b>Total</b>		<b>Cost of Water Distribution (B) \$</b>						
<b>Is this Plan recommended by a Professional Agrologist (PAg) or a Certified Crop Advisor (CCA)?</b>			<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Have you included a detailed, labelled map of your project? *</b>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Name:</b>		<b>PAg and/or CCA?</b>		<b>Phone number:</b>			<b>Date:</b>	
				<b>Email:</b>				
<b>Cost of Other and/or BMP Action Plan recommendation**(C) \$</b>								
<b>Total Cost of Project (A+B+C) \$</b>								

\*Please include an aerial map of the field. Note existing perimeter fences, water sources, and proposed paddocks, as outlined on page 2 of this document. The map can be generated using Google Earth or GeoDiscover Alberta. A [Guide to Locating and Labelling BMP Action Plans](#) is available on the RDAR/OFCAF website. \*\* Maximum of \$2,000.

[rdar.ca/funding-opportunities/ofcaf](http://rdar.ca/funding-opportunities/ofcaf)

[ofcaf.bmp@rdar.ca](mailto:ofcaf.bmp@rdar.ca)

## ROTATIONAL GRAZING VIRTUAL FENCING – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please describe using a minimum of 50 words:

1. Your Plan to place virtual fence collars on cattle, including the type of squeeze.
2. How often will you check your cattle and virtual fence collars (eyes-on, in person) to assess the need for adjustments or removal?
3. What is your Plan on animal welfare protocol for continuous virtual fence collars use, especially on fields where there is not access to a squeeze?
4. How will you train your cattle with the virtual fence collars for virtual fencing (e.g. size of field, how many days, what are the indicators that the cattle are trained)?
5. Can you describe the vegetation and/or topographical variation on your farm or ranch that can be better managed using the virtual fences?
6. Your virtual fencing plan with reference to your labelled map. Include paddock locations with potential moves.

**Please Confirm:**

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
The virtual fence will be used only for cattle.		
The field has an existing physical perimeter fence		
The virtual fencing will not be used near roads or highways unless an industry-standard perimeter fence is in place.		
Water sources are available within each grazing paddock.		
I understand that the virtual paddocks and monitoring will occur on cell phones or computers, and user skills are needed.		
I understand that the final report <b>must</b> include an activation email from the virtual fencing company and pictures of the collared cattle (date- and GPS-stamped).		

**I certify that the information provided in this application is true, complete, and correct to the best of my knowledge.**

**I attest that all cattle to be fitted with virtual fence collars under this application are currently owned by me and present on my operation. No future or yet-to-be-acquired cattle are included.**

**I confirm that I have read, understood and agree with the terms and conditions above and that the check box has the same legal force and effect as if the Applicant had signed a printed copy of this document.**

**I acknowledge that funding is subject to the RDAR–OFCAF Sub-Contribution Agreement and the OFCAF Program Guide.**