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GRASSLAND BIOMES

Grasslands have an erratic drought cycle that slows tree growth, but has enough moisture for grasses.



Often these areas are found in the interiors of continents.

There are 3 types of grasslands:



**1. Tropical grasslands
- areas bordering
tropical rain forests.**

Savannah has alternating wet and dry seasons; periodic droughts; with wind-pollinated grasses

2. Temperate - have more consistent rainfall with winds causing rapid evaporation.



Mammals may be small herbivores, who live in burrows and escape predators by running and hopping.



Larger grazing mammals live in temperate grasslands called the prairie in the U.S. and Canada; Pampas in South America; Veldt in Africa and the Steppes in Europe and Asia.

Chaparral is a temperate grassland found in coastal areas with marine climate. Winters are mild and wet; summers are hot and dry.



Fires burn vegetation and increase the risk of flooding.

Prairie grassland have been called the world's bread baskets.



Grasslands supply the cereal crops (domesticated grasses) and the meat from cattle raised on this land.

About 50 million people survive by raising livestock on grasslands.



3. Polar - (Tundra) has long, dark winters with vegetation growing close to the ground.

Precipitation is between 150-250 mm/yr.

Permafrost is a frozen layer in the soil that prevents water from seeping into the ground.

Tundra mammals do not hibernate because the summer is too short.

Cold slows decomposition of organic matter, so soil is poor.

RANGELAND POLICY



Grasslands that primarily supply natural forage for herbivores are called rangelands.

Rangelands are a renewable resource that prevent erosion and serve as watersheds.

Overgrazing occurs when too many animals feed in one area for too long and exceed the carrying capacity of the rangeland. It is the major cause of desertification.

Best management includes controlling the stocking rate - number of each kind of animal per area and rotating grazing.



Overgrazing further lowers productivity, compacts soil until it won't hold water, and riparian zones are destroyed.

Riparian zones are the lush vegetation areas along streams that are destroyed by trampling and poorly managed livestock grazing.

Predator Control controversy is another management concern. Coyotes kill sheep but also reduce competition between sheep and rodents.



Should predatory species like the gray wolf be eradicated, and what affect does that have on the food chain?