Multi Species Grazing
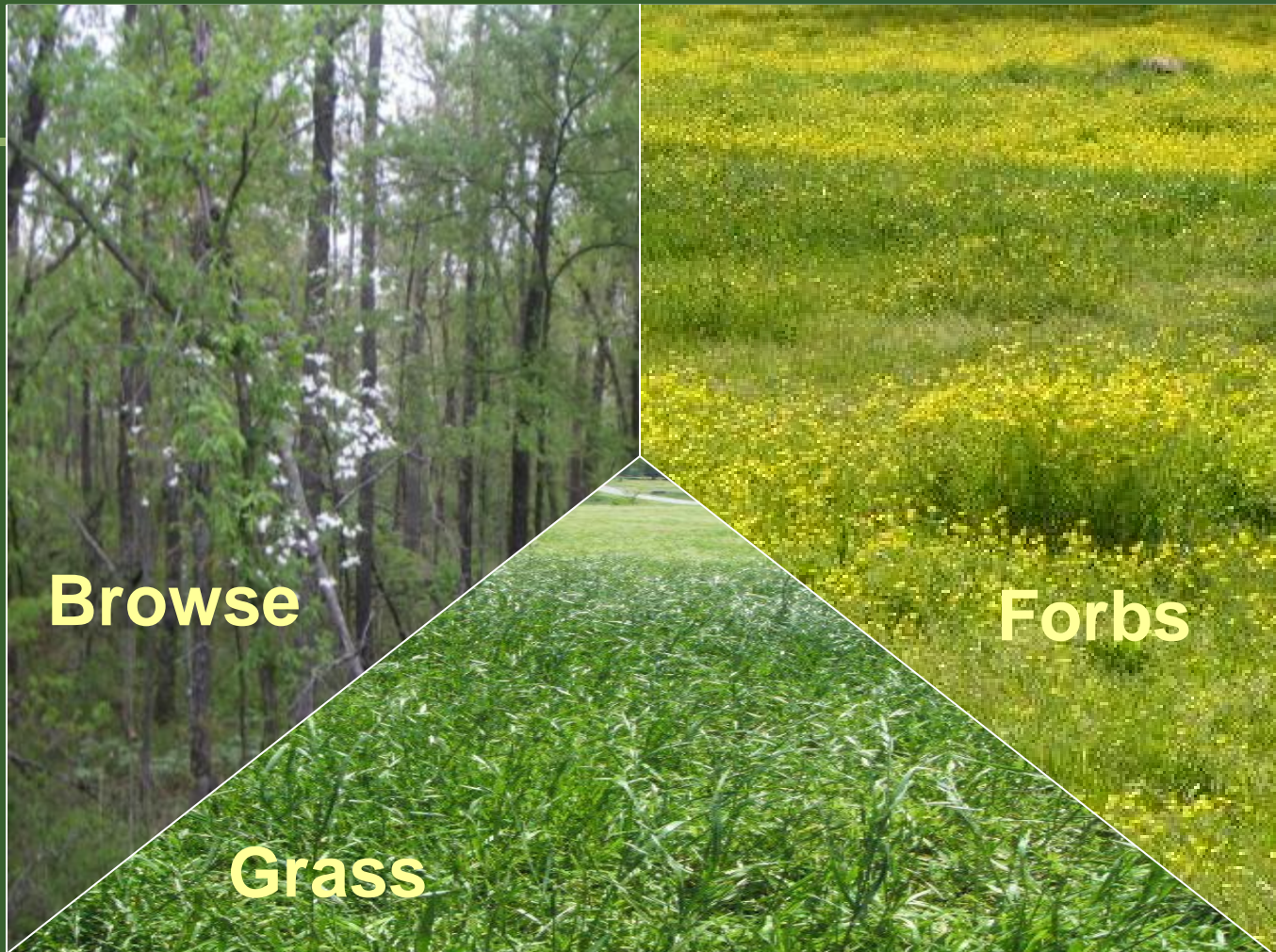
Ann Wells, DVM
Springpond Holistic Animal Health
Prairie Grove AR

Why a different species?

- Land base and size
- Additional enterprise
- Raise weed eaters and fertilizers instead of buying weed killers and fertilizer
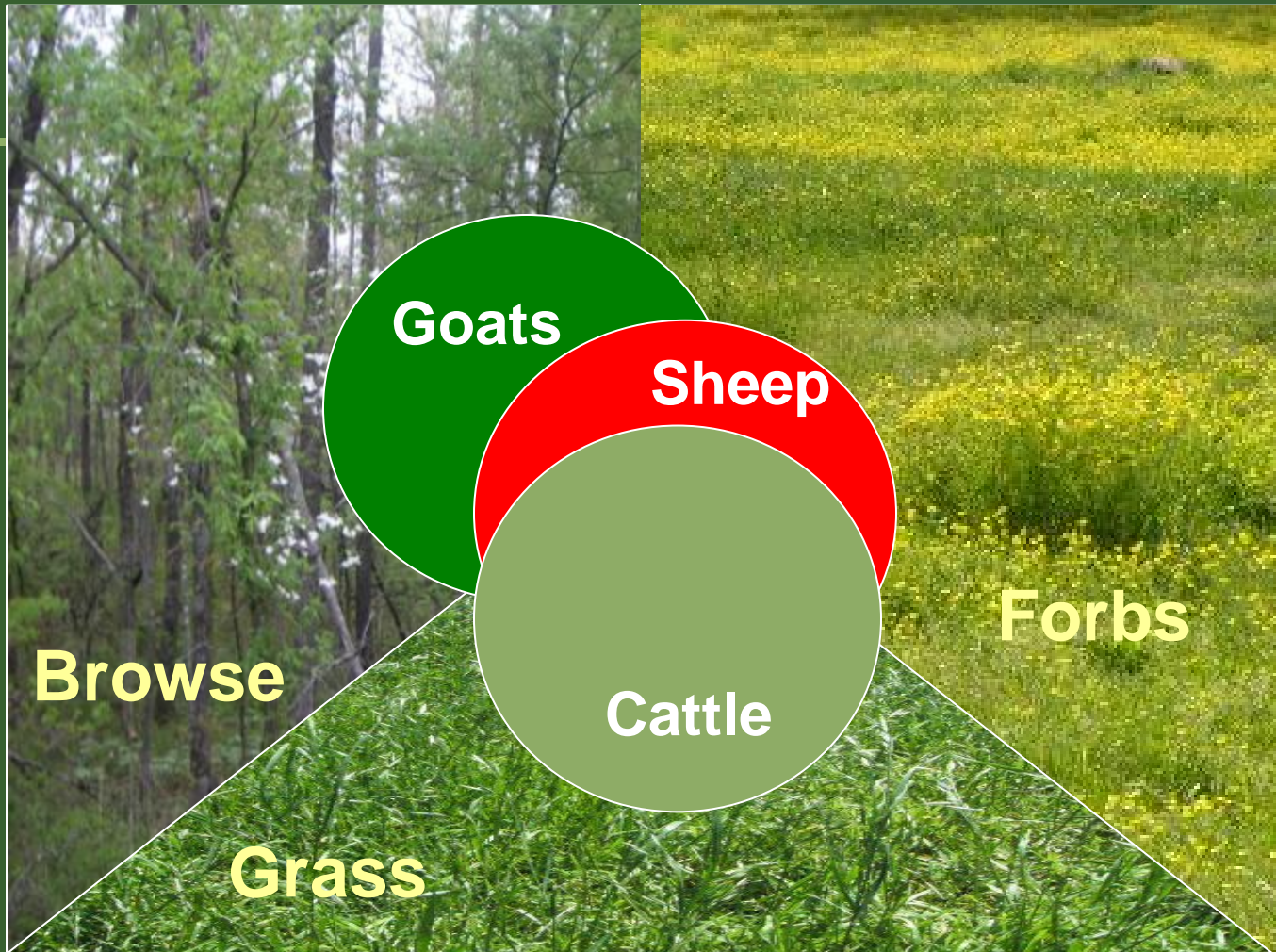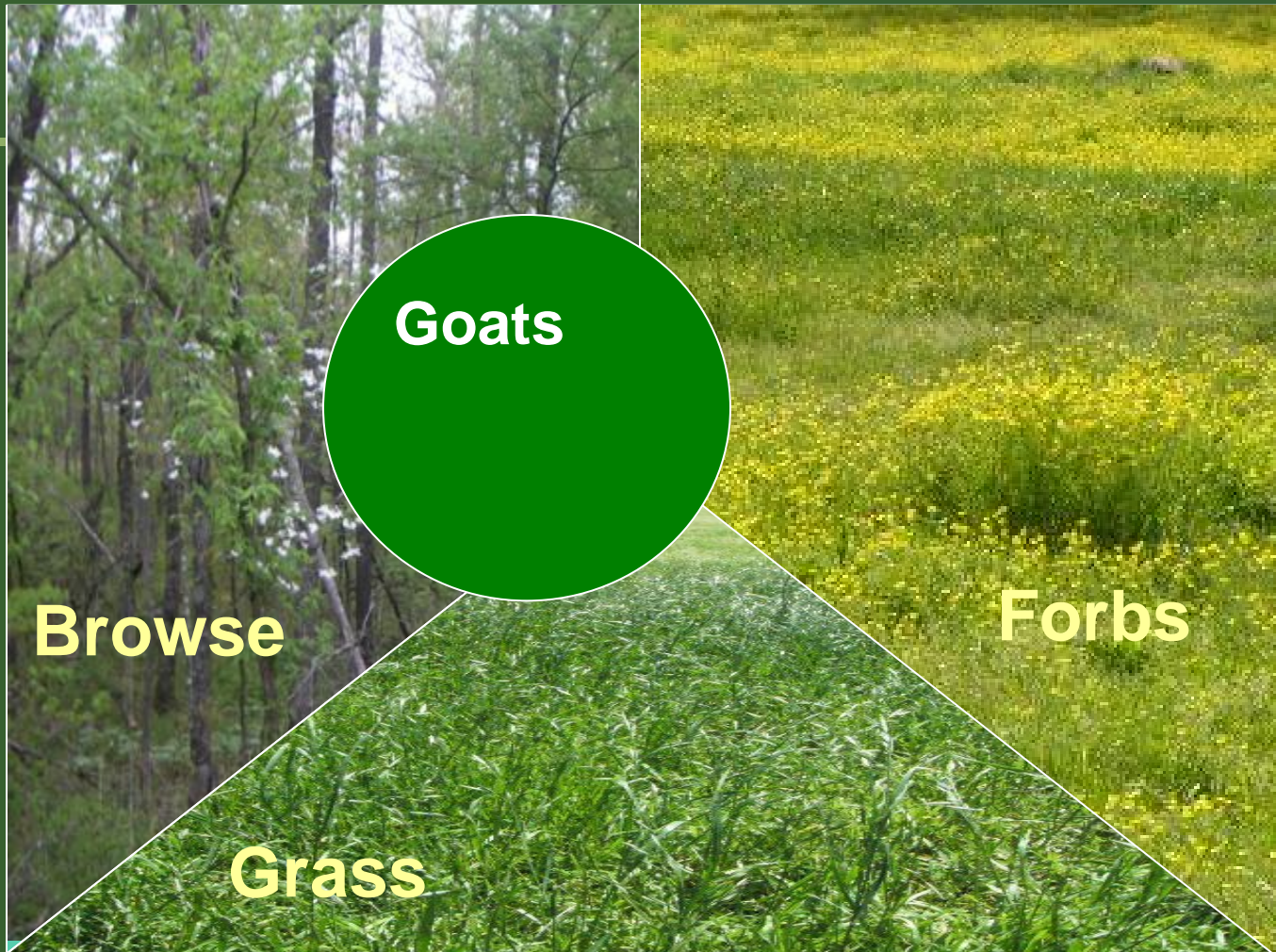- Producer likes them

Forage Base

Browse

Forbs

Grass

Feeding Preferences

Feeding Preferences

Feeding Preferences
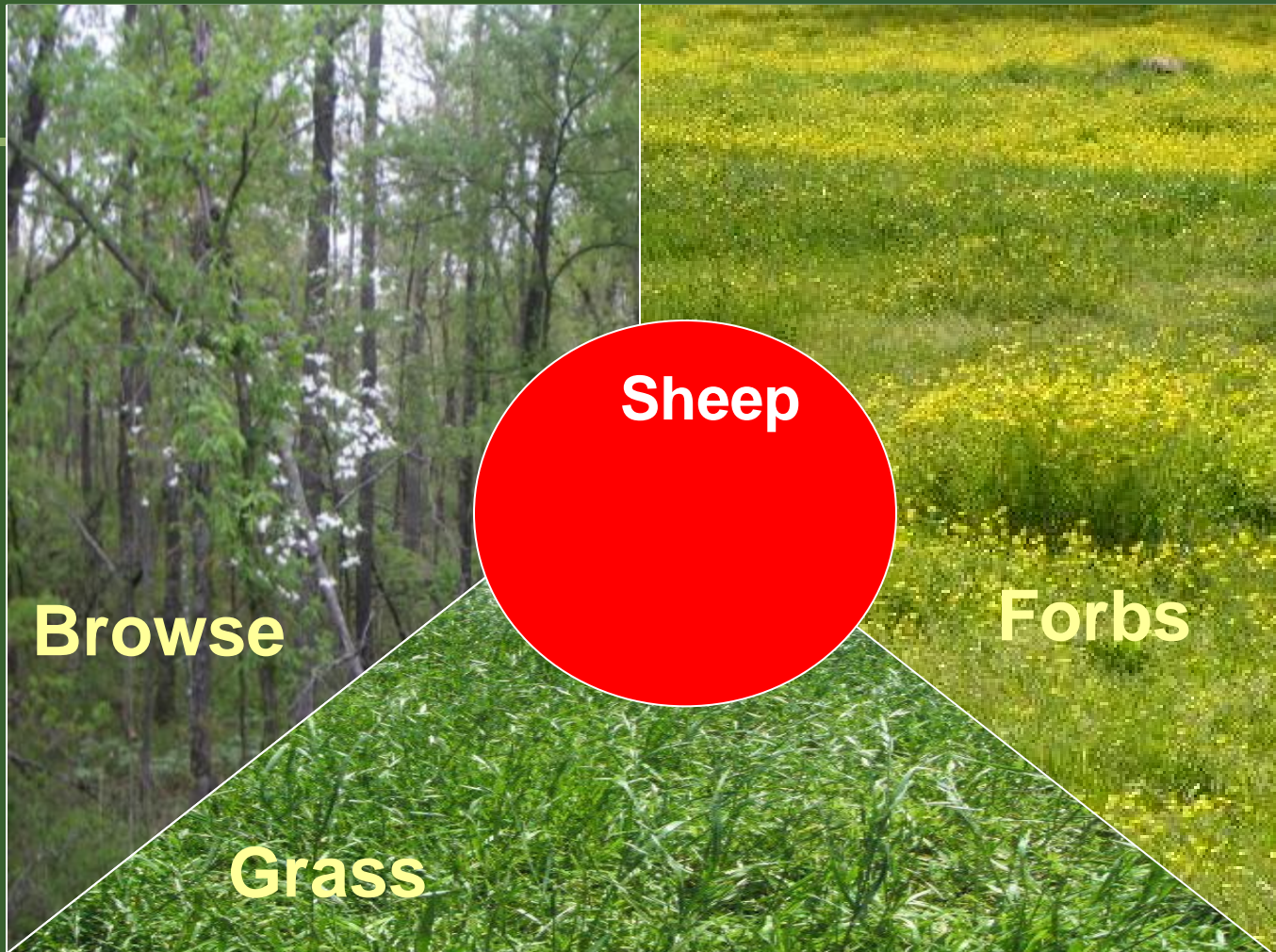
GRAZING HEIGHT, FROM SOIL SURFACE

LOWER ….TO HIGHER

Horse ≥ Sheep > Cattle > Goat

Stocking Rate

- Rule of thumb
  - 5 animals per one cow
- Works for sheep
- Goats
  - Brush control
  - Maintain browse 1-2 goats per acre
- Overstocking major cause of health problems, especially internal parasites

10 Acre farm

1-3 ac/cow-calf unit

5 ewe-lamb units/cow-calf unit

2-5 doe-kid units/cow-calf unit

Goats are Harder to Raise than Sheep or Cattle

Why?

Diet preferences

Parasites

Sheep are easier

Land management issues with goats

- ⑩ Maintaining browse for years
- ⑩ Adjusting goats to eating grass
- ⑩ Providing nutritional needs mainly with forages

- ⑩ Each forage type will require different management and grazing pressure

Chemical composition of various plants browsed by goats (%)

Browse type	Crude protein	Neutral detergent fiber	Calcium	Phosphorous
Multiflora rose	**18.8**	**34.5**	**0.99**	**0.32**
Honeysuckle	**12.8**	**34.5**	**1.21**	**0.30**
Brambles	**15.9**	**24.5**	**0.23**	**0.84**
Privet	**18.0**	**26.8**	**0.89**	**0.34**
Green briar	**17.0**	**39.5**	**0.60**	**0.18**
Kudzu leaves	**23.7**			
Trumpet creeper	**16.7**	**43.1**	**0.42**	**0.22**

Browse species to monitor for goats

⑩ **Desirable (Preferred)**

⑩ Multiflora rose

⑩ Briars

⑩ Ragweed

⑩ Lambsquarter

⑩ Sericea

⑩ Honeysuckle

⑩ Kudzu

⑩ Privet

Note: some of these plants are invasive so planting may not be a good option

Browse species to monitor

⑩ Intermediate
- Ironweed
- Spiny amaranth
- Pigweed
- Buckbrush
- Curly dock
- Pokeweed
- Buttercup
- White clover
- Thistle
- Wingstem

Browse species to monitor

⑩ Undesirable
- Horsenettle
- Perilla mint
- Bitter sneezeweed

Monitoring general trend concerning browse

- **Key species**
  - Monitor to determine upward or downward trend of browse condition
  - Intermediate browsed species are good key species
- **Age class of browse**
  - One age class indicates downward trend in browse
- **Hedging**
  - Indicator of heavy recent browse
  - 2+ yr of growth above hedge line indicates trend toward lighter browsing
- **Browse lines**
  - Forage is beyond reach of animals
- **Abundance of low preference forage species**
  - indicates key species is not competing with lower preference species.

Browse species to monitor

- ⑩ Intermediate
  - Ironweed
  - Spiny amaranth
  - Pigweed
  - Buckbrush
  - Curly dock
  - Pokeweed
  - Buttercup
  - White clover
  - Thistle

Goat Husbandry – Relative to Grazing/Browsing

- Goats are <u>more selective foragers</u> than cattle
- Goats tend to <u>prefer taller vegetation</u>
- Don't browse vegetation at all growth stages
- <u>Fence woods separate from pasture</u>
- Best to rotate off paddocks before goats graze re-growth
- Goats browse top down and thus, more uniformly
- Concentrated tannins are natural de-wormers
-     medicinal pasture"

Sheep Husbandry – Relative to Grazing/Browsing

- ⑩ **Sheep are <u>less selective foragers</u> than cattle**
- ⑩ **Sheep tend to <u>prefer shorter vegetation</u>**
- ⑩ **Sheep want to graze no matter how much vegetation**
- ⑩ **<u>Sheep prefer forbs</u>**
- ⑩ **Sheep will graze to the ground if allowed to do so**
- ⑩ **Sheep will graze rather than eat hay**
- ⑩ **Must allow pastures to rest**
- ⑩ **Concentrated tannins are natural de-wormers**
- ⑩ **"medicinal pasture"**

Maximize intake

Most efficient grazing for goats and cattle is when the forage height is 6-10 inches

Maximize intake

Most efficient grazing for sheep is when the forage height is 4-6 inches

10"

8"

6"

6"

6"

6"

42"

A <u>switch or clip on bottom wire</u> allows it to be turned on or off depending on vegetation

All other wires hot

July 15
Sheep pasture

August 24

August 5

August 5

May 17

May 16

May 24

Health concerns

- Parasites are the main disease
- Must have a management plan
- Most dewormers are no longer effective
- Don't forget about weather!
- Predator control

Management strategies

- Culling is important
- Grazing species together vs separately
- Deciding on marketing
- When to breed

- Delaware Chickens

- Egg Layers

- Follow sheep