

# Grazing planning for a tricky season

July 24

Grass is a great plant; the more it gets eaten and allowed to regrow, the more it grows. Making the most of the grazing is the most financially impactful step a livestock farm can make. Grazing grass is the cheapest feed stuff, yet it can be full of quality nutrition for growing stock as well as suckler cows.

How we set up and think about grazing is key, this can be before the grazing season starts (or even better at the end of the last season)! It is particularly important to adapt your grazing plan when weather changes, particularly when or if drought starts. There are many different types of grazing, moving away from set stocking to rotational or even mob grazing can massively increase grass growth as well as utilization.

## 1 Rotational grazing

Take advantage of Pallaton's regrowth ability by setting up a rotation - this is the best way to achieve the highest number of grazings over a season.

Divide the total area of crop into blocks (i.e. 4 blocks) and use a rotation length of 28-40 days, depending on your area and climatic conditions.



## 2 Set stocking

If it is not practical to utilise a rotation, instead of shifting at regular intervals animals can stay on the crop for a fixed period of time.

Take a yield assessment prior to grazing to work out a stocking rate that will calculate the right number of animals for the required time.



## 3 Strip grazing

### Strip graze and back fence for regrowth

If using a strip grazing method and repeat grazings are required, back fencing grazed areas and managing good residuals is critical to protecting re-growing plants due to the risk of treading damage and over grazing.

### Strip graze and no back fence at end of crop

Strip grazing can be used with no back fencing for the final grazing of Pallaton, for example a winter grazing with cattle, when regrowth potential is not required.



Dividing up existing fields into at least 8 paddocks and moving them every 3-4 days can be a first step. This can usually be done with minimal changes to water supply needed. This should allow 28 days rest for the grass to regrow. Cows with calves at foot benefit from double strand electric fencing although once trained single is fine, but sheep definitely need three strands!

For maximal impact we want the grazing animals as tight as possible but for a short time giving the longest rest period. Sheep and cows can be mixed into a "flerd" or sheep can go ahead of the beef cows.

As a rough plan 35 cows with calves at foot running with a bull normally need approx. 1 acre a day. By eating the grass down to about 5cm it means the quality of the next graze is maintained and also stops the animals only eating the tasty grasses and clovers and leaving the other bits, but means everything is eaten. Dry matter can dramatically change with the weather but also how old and stalky the grasses are. Ensuring energy and protein levels are high is key, well maintained grasses are currently at 16% crude protein and 12% metabolizable energy.

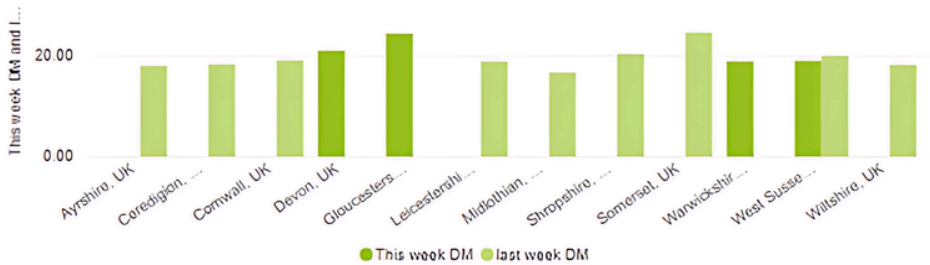
## Forage for Knowledge - Grass quality



Grass dry matter content (%)



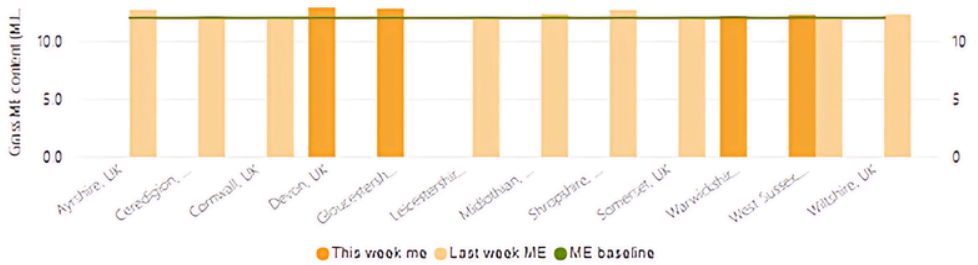
This week DM and last week DM by Region



Grass ME content (MJ/kg DM)



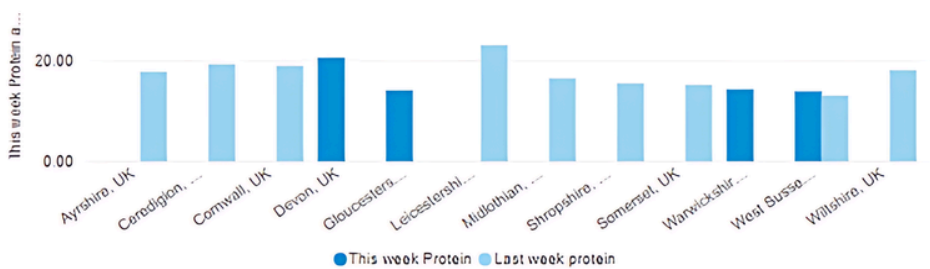
Forage for knowledge - Grass ME content



Grass CP content (%)



This week Protein and Last week protein by Region



Data updated:  
Jun 13, 2024

Parasite management can also be helped with rotational grazing as the eggs that are shed in the faeces need time to hatch into larva before they are eaten and cause infection. Because of the rest period, this can mean that the eggs either haven't hatched before the next graze or that all the larva have died before they return. In addition, when not grazing the pasture as tight it means that less larva are ingested overall. Herbal leys have natural anthelmintic properties and can help reduce wormer use.

Cows evenly spreading their faeces on the fields means insects such as dung beetles can establish and add to the biodiversity on farm.

Carbon sequestration is also maximized because grass growth absorbs lots of carbon dioxide to make into sugars and energy.

If you want to discuss any grazing plans or integrated parasite control please just give us a ring.



Kat



### VET TECH UPDATE...

Don't forget it's the friendly flies season, contact us for more information.



# MEETINGS COMING UP...

## **\*\*Summer Course Programme - 2024\*\***

### **AHPA Approved AI Course, 3 days, £515+VAT:**

- 17th-19th July - Chippenham & Kemble
- 11th-13th September - Location TBC



### **BCVA CHCSB Lantra Approved First Aid For Feet with Tom Morris, 1 day, £300+VAT:**

- Wednesday 24th July - Old Sodbury



### **BCVA CHCSB Lantra Approved Intermediate Foot Trimming with Tom Morris, 3 day, £800+VAT:**

- 18th-20th September - Old Sodbury & Pewsey

### **Short Course Series, afternoon courses: £75 + VAT:**

- Assessment and Care of the Sick & Down Cow Management: Tuesday 9th July - Kemble
- Youngstock Care & Management: Wednesday 31st July - Iron Acton
- Calving the Cow: Tuesday 6th August - Malmesbury



***For more information or  
to book a place on any of  
our courses please  
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