

Grass10 Weekly Checklist

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Use the grazing calculator on PastureBase Ireland



Monitor grazing targets throughout February



Apply lime now



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Dry settled weather has resulted in excellent grazing and trafficability on farms throughout the country. Farmers should take the opportunity this week to turn priority animals out to grass. These may be weanlings on drystock/beef farms or autumn or freshly calved cows on dairy farms. Be flexible! Take the opportunity this week with dry conditions to graze a wet paddock or a paddock with poor access. Identify your first 30% of the farm/milking platform to graze during February. Animals should start grazing in covers of 700-1000 KgDM/ha to condition the animals to grazing.

Use the grazing calculator on PastureBase Ireland

The grazing calculator was developed to help Irish farmers to correctly allocate grass to a given group of animals that are being turned out to a paddock. All you need is to open your PastureBase App and click 1. "Cover Data" and 2. "Grazing calculator". Follow our 5 step process below to help you allocate the correct area of a paddock.

Monitor grazing targets throughout February

With excellent grazing conditions, many farmers have been grazing aggressively over the last 10 days, especially those with a high proportion of cows calved in January and/or winter milking herds. The target on dry farms would be to have around 15% grazed this week to graze 30-40% by 1st March. Complete an AFC to review progress and avoid dipping under 500 Kg DM/Ha at all costs. Heavier farms/early February calving & drystock farms should get some grazing done this week and target to have 5-10% grazed.

Apply lime now!

Many farmers missed the opportunity last autumn to apply lime to paddocks with a lime requirement. Chemical fertiliser prices are forecast to remain high so having soil in the optimum pH status is vital to getting efficient and responsive grass growth from fertiliser applied. Correcting pH status in paddocks to 6.3 can release up to 80 Kg N/Ha and make P & K more available. Take advantage of good ground conditions now to apply.

THE GRAZING CALCULATOR ON THE PASTUREBASE APP

Step 1 Select the paddock that you are going to graze. If you have completed a grass cover recently the cover should be correct. Edit the cover if necessary.

Step 2 Enter the number of animals being turned out to grass. This could be 20 beef weanlings or 60 freshly calved dairy cows for example.

Step 3 Enter the daily grass intakes. For beef animals use 2% of bodyweight. Use the table below for intake guides from Moorepark research work for dairy cows after calving. In the example below dairy cows are out for a day grazing being allocated 7 kg DM grass.

Step 4 Select the interval, whether it is for 12 hours or 24 hours grazing. This will give you the number of grazing's in the paddock and what area the animals require.

Step 5 If the paddocks is square or rectangular you can enter the width or primary length and it will aid you in what length or secondary length to set up your temporary wire

The screenshot shows the 'Grazing Calculator' app interface. It has a green header with a back arrow and the title 'Grazing Calculator'. Below the header are several input fields: 'Paddock:' with value 11 (circled in red with a '1'), 'Cover (kg DM / ha):' with value 900, 'Residual (cm):' with value 4, 'Area (ha):' with value 1.5, 'No of LU:' with value 60 (circled in red with a '2'), 'Daily Grass Intake (kg DM/LU):' with value 7 (circled in red with a '3'), and 'Interval:' with value 24 hours (circled in red with a '4'). Below these fields, the app calculates and displays '3.2 days - 0.47 ha/day - 78 m²/LU/day'. A red arrow points from this result to the 'Area (ha):' field, which now shows 0.47. Below the area field are 'Primary length (m):' with value 60 (circled in red with a '5') and 'Secondary length (m):' with value 78.3.

DEROGATION 2023

Derogation farmers must record the grass produced annually on their farm through Pasture Base Ireland from 2023. A minimum of 20 measurements (plate meter or cut & weigh) must be completed on the main grazing platform. It is the responsibility of the farmer to complete grass measurements and recording of grass data.

The following measurements are required per month over the season as follows:

- Feb (1)
- Mar (2)
- Apr – Sep (14)
- Oct (2)
- Nov (1)

