



# Beef Action for Profit

## Better Returns from Grazing Management

**Boost your returns by managing grassland to maximise growth rates for stock, while allowing stocking rates to be increased and worms to be effectively controlled.**

Effective grazing management must be a key objective in all herds given the extent to which profitability depends on feed costs and growth rates.

Monitoring of sward height and soil fertility is fundamental to ensure timings of grazing and applications of nutrients are optimised.

### Targets

- Draw up a **grazing plan** to determine grazing and rest periods.
- Monitor the grazing in all fields by measuring **sward heights** regularly.
- Manage grazing to achieve daily liveweight gains of at least 0.9 kg/day.

### Management Guidelines

- Monitor available grazing by measuring **sward heights**, which will allow a grazing plan of grazing and rest periods to be formulated.
- Understand that **stocking rates** need to change through the season in relation to grass growth.
- Reduce **parasite** burdens and calf exposure to infestation by **categorising pastures** for level of risk, planning grazing and weaning stock onto lower risk pastures, and having an effective anthelmintic programme outlined in a herd **health plan**.
- Monitor growth rates against **pre-set targets** by weighing a sample of cattle regularly and adjusting grazing and concentrates to maintain daily gains of over 0.9 kg per day, and monitor **market prices** to take advantage of higher prices.
- Maximise the percentage of cattle finished off grazing to reduce the number that need to be over-wintered, thus reducing finishing costs.
- Promote **clover** growth by positive management and aim for a mid-season content of white clover of 20% in lowland pastures.
- Use **rotational grazing** systems to optimise animal performance as well as to maintain output and optimum sward height in the face of seasonal differences in sward growth.
- Appreciate that grazing and **conservation** for silage or hay should be integrated, which will require careful planning and flexible management.
- Match **sward fertilisation** carefully to pasture need by checking **N, P, K and pH status** regularly using soil tests.
- Identify areas where **soil compaction** or **soil damage** may have occurred and attempt to alleviate the problem through improving the entry or exit to a field, or the siting of walkways and feeding areas.
- Use an effective **weed control** programme to reduce the impact on grass production and quality of competition from weeds, and to eradicate the potential danger to livestock of poisonous weeds, such as **ragwort**.

More detailed advice, costings, calculators and further information supporting these guidelines are available free of charge to levy payers in a unique interactive Beef Action for Profit resource at [www.eblex.org.uk](http://www.eblex.org.uk)



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### Stocking Rates for Well-Managed Grassland

Stage of season	Stocking rate (kg liveweight per ha)	Equivalent number of 200 kg steers per ha
Early (May/June)	2,200	11
Mid (July)	1,500	8
Late (August/September)	1,000	5

### Recommended Sward Heights for Cattle Under Set Stocking and Rotational Grazing

Grazing type	Sward Heights	
	Early season	Late season
Set stocking	6-8 cm	8-10 cm
Rotational grazing	Enter paddock	Leave paddock
	15-20 cm	6-8 cm

### Target Liveweight Gains at Grass

Breed / Sex	First season	Second season
Continental-cross steers	0.85 kg per day	0.90 kg per day
Continental-cross heifers	0.75 kg per day	0.85 kg per day
Suckled calves – steers*	1.10 kg per day	0.90 kg per day
Suckled calves – heifers*	0.95 kg per day	0.85 kg per day

\*Suckled calves will have access to creep in the first season.