

AHDB Grazing & Forage Year Planner

Get the most you can from grazed grass and silages. Use this grazing and forage calendar to make sure you are doing the right jobs at the right time.

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fencing, tracks and water troughs MOT to be carried out before turnout</p>  <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Analyse borehole water</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Finalise spring rotation planner</p> <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> First spring rotation should be around 4–50 days from the end of February</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Capitalise on grazed grass by turning out to pasture as soon as possible</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enter covers around 2,400–2,600 kg DM/ha</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Enter covers around 2,300–2,500 kg DM/ha</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Achieve target residuals of 1,500 kg DM/ha at the start of the season</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Soil sample 25% of the farm (rotating to ensure each field is sampled every 4 years)</p> <p>Task 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aim for 30% of the grazing platform to be grazed by the end of February</p> <p>Silage tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Begin nutrient applications for grass, as per nutrient management plan and in line with NVZ's regulations</p> <p>Research has shown that achieving an extra day at grass for a 100-suckler-cow herd is worth, on average, £125 per day</p> <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wait until soil temperatures rise to 5–6°C for five consecutive days before applying nitrogen fertiliser</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In a wet spring, reduce paddocks to one-day or 12-hour paddocks, turning priority stock out first. They will make the most economic use of grass</p>  <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aim to graze 60% of the platform by 20 March</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure livestock magnesium requirements are met to prevent grass staggers</p> <p>Silage tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss your requirements and expectations and agree a price for silage-making with your contractor</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Review silage budget for this cropping year and reconcile with silage requirements for the next 12 months</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Roll silage fields if necessary</p> <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aim to complete first rotation (100% grazed) 7 days before magic day</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> For GB farms, magic day normally arrives between 4 and 20 April. Make a note of when grass supply matches grass demand on your farm for future reference</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> After magic day you will need to shift from managing a deficit to dealing with a surplus</p> <p>Task 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assess clover content and adjust fertiliser applications accordingly</p> <p>As a guide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Cattle should not enter covers higher than 3,000 kg DM/ha <input type="checkbox"/> Ewes should not enter covers higher than 2,500 kg DM/ha and lambs no higher than 2,400 kg DM/ha <p>Silage tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare clamps for first cut. Maintain bale stacking site – need a firm, level and free-draining base. If vermin are a problem check your net is free from damage</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Drill forage maize and apply nutrients, as per nutrient management plan</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aim to take first cut in early May – analyse grass for nitrates and sugars pre-cutting to achieve high quality</p> <p>Top tip:</p> <p>Bales within the stack retain their quality better than bales on the outside, so place the best silage within the stack</p> <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Reduce rotation length depending on grass growth rates, usually between 18 and 21 days</p>  <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Have a dry weather management contingency plan in place to minimise the effect on forage stocks and livestock performance</p> <p>Silage tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a silage budget for this cropping year and reconcile with silage requirements for the next 12 months</p>  <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Measure grass twice a week when grass growth rates hit 75 kg DM/ha</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Remove grass surplus as silage. Do not wait to bulk up; focus on the feed supply and quality in the next grazing round</p> <p>Silage tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Estimate the quantity of silage required for the next 12 months</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Develop a cropping strategy to produce sufficient silage to meet estimated requirements for the next 12 months</p> <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Monitor grazing to ensure residuals are consistently met and that wastage does not build up in the bottom of the sward</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> In a hot summer, consider the implications of heat stress on your stock and have a 'plan B' to reduce exposure</p> <p>Silage tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare clamps for wholecrop silage</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Keep an eye on cereal crop ripeness, if harvesting as fermented wholecrop</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aim to take second cut 30–35 days after first cut</p> <p>Task 4</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aim to take third cut 30–35 days after second cut</p> <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> The next grazing season starts now with managing autumn pastures</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Finalise your autumn rotation planner</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 'Clean out month' and time to ensure pastures are grazed down to target residual – 1,500 kg DM/ha</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> All grass wintering – as a general rule of thumb the farm grass cover should average at 2,000–2,500 kg DM/ha before the winter system commences. Calculate a winter feed budget to understand how the grass supply will meet the flock demand over the period</p> <p>Silage tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Review grass silage yields and reseed where necessary to improve sward quality</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare clamps for maize silage</p> <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Highest average farm cover (AFC) should be achieved in mid-to-late September, with a rotation length of more than 35 days from mid-September</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Assess water flow, trough size and fences – make required improvements</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Apply lime in accordance with your most recent soil pH results. If your analysis is over four years old, retest soil</p> <p>Closed period for applying manufactured nitrogen fertilisers starts 15 September for grassland across all soil types until 15 January in NVZs</p> <p>Closed period for applying organic manure with readily available nitrogen content (e.g. slurry, poultry manures) on shallow or sandy soils starts 1 September for grassland in NVZs</p> <p>Silage tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Keep an eye on maize crop ripeness to harvest at optimum dry matter</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> When all silage is harvested, review the silage budget for this cropping year and reconcile with silage requirements for the next 12 months</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sample silages for analysis and formulate rations</p> <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Start last rotation around 5–10 October and aim to graze and close 60% of the platform in October</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Graze all covers >3,000 kg DM/ha in October, especially on wet farms</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Use back fencing if needed to reduce poaching</p> <p>Task 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Closed period for applying organic manure with readily available nitrogen content (e.g. slurry, poultry manures) on all other soil types, apart from shallow or sandy soils, starts 15 October for grassland in NVZs</p> <p>Task 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Target closing AFC at housing should be around 2,150–2,230 kg DM/ha on 20 November</p> <p>Notes</p>    <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Aim to graze the remaining 40% of the platform and finish the last rotation by 15–20 November</p> <p>Notes</p>	<p>Grazing tasks</p> <p>Task 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Conduct annual tonnage report and set targets for following year and identify paddocks for improvement</p> <p>Notes</p>

It's recommended to set stock ewes and lambs until at least 3 weeks of age to avoid confusion

