

Autumn grassland management plan

The grazing season begins in autumn. The decisions you make during this period will have a direct effect on spring grass availability. Complete and follow this planner to create a closing plan for your farm.

Fields that are going to be grazed first in the spring need to be closed off first. Allow at least four months for grass over the winter, as it may take over 30 days for each leaf to be produced during the winter.

Area available for grazing: ____ hectares (e.g. 100 ha)

Date on which you plan to start your last grazing round: _____ e.g. 10 October

Date	Target % area closed	Area you need to graze to reach target (ha)	Ha/day	Names of fields to graze to be close to reaching target	Actual area grazed (ha)
<i>Mid/late Oct e.g. 10 Oct</i>	20	<i>e.g. 0.2 x total ha = 20</i>	<i>e.g. 20/7 = 2.86 ha</i>		
	40	<i>e.g. 0.4 x total ha = 40</i>			
	60	<i>e.g. 0.6 x total ha = 60</i>			
	80	<i>e.g. 0.8 x total ha = 80</i>			
<i>Late Nov (cattle)/Mid Dec (sheep) e.g. 15 Nov onwards</i>	100	<i>e.g. 1 x total ha = 100</i>			

Guidelines

- Fields/paddocks should be grazed out tight to 4 cm (1,500 kg DM/ha) for high-quality swards in the spring
- For sheep, the first paddocks closed should be sheltered and close to the lambing area
- For cattle, start housing heavier cattle if you are ahead of your weekly target area grazed
- Use temporary electric fencing if required to reach post-grazing targets without forcing stock to graze to low heights for a prolonged period

Do not re-graze closed paddocks.

August

- 'Clean out' month
- Graze/cut down paddocks to target residuals of 1,500 kg DM/ha
- Tidy up paddocks if the grass has got away from you by closing up for surplus silage or mowing
- Rotation length should be around 25 days by the end of August

September

- 'Building cover' month
- Highest average farm cover should be achieved by mid to late September
- Aim to have rotation length of more than 35 days from mid-September
- Last application of nitrogen before closed period on manufactured nitrogen fertiliser in a Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) on 15 September

October

- 'Start of last rotation' month
- Aim to have rotation length of 45 days from the start of the last rotation
- Last rotation should start around mid/late October depending on the stock type, system and soil type
- Ensure all covers >3,000 kg DM/ha are grazed
- Aim to graze 60% of the platform in October
- Graze paddocks to target residual of 1,500 kg DM/ha to encourage winter tillering

November

- 'Closing' month
- Aim to finish last rotation around late November/mid December depending on the stock type, system and soil type
- Finish grazing the last 40% of the grazing platform in November
- Close at target average farm cover around 2,150–2,230 kg DM/ha

Source: Graise Consultancy.

For more information on grazing management visit ahdb.org.uk/grass

Produced for you by:

AHDB
Stoneleigh Park
Kenilworth
Warwickshire
CV8 2TL

T 024 7669 2051
E comms@ahdb.org.uk
W ahdb.org.uk

   

If you no longer wish to receive this information, please email us on comms@ahdb.org.uk

AHDB is a statutory levy board, funded by farmers, growers and others in the supply chain. We equip the industry with easy to use, practical know-how which they can apply straight away to make better decisions and improve their performance. For further information, please visit ahdb.org.uk

While the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board seeks to ensure that the information contained within this document is accurate at the time of printing, no warranty is given in respect thereof and, to the maximum extent permitted by law, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board accepts no liability for loss, damage or injury howsoever caused (including that caused by negligence) or suffered directly or indirectly in relation to information and opinions contained in or omitted from this document.

© Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board 2021.
All rights reserved

70043 0724

AHDB