
## GLOSSARY OF GRAZING TERMS

**Kg Dry Matter/ha -** The measure of yield. It's the material remaining after water has been removed and is the portion of grass that animals can use for nutrition. An essential measure of grazing management it will guide the levels of stocking. The height of the sward can be used as a good indicator of Kg DM/ha using a swardstick or rising plate meter.

**Cover -** is the average amount of grass in Kg DM/ha that is available at a given time. It can refer to a field, paddock or the average across the farm. To ensure grass quality can be maintained, target cover is used to guide grazing decisions. Pre-grazing cover minus post grazing cover gives an idea of grass available to be eaten.

| Pre-grazing cover (Kg DM/ha) | Post-grazing cover (Kg DM/ha) | Grass available (Kg DM/ha) |
|---|---|---|
| 2500 | 1500 | 1000 (2500-1500) |

**Residual -** this is the amount of grass left over after grazing (it will never be zero!). Getting this right is key to making sure that grass quality is quantity is maintained. If the residual is too low regrowth will be slower, too high and grass quality will decline.

**Utilisation -** a measure of how much of the available grass was grazed. Not all grass will be grazed due to trampling, soiling with dung and urine or dead leaves that were not grazed off at the right time. Increasing the number of stock on a given area for a short period ensures as much grass as possible is utilised.

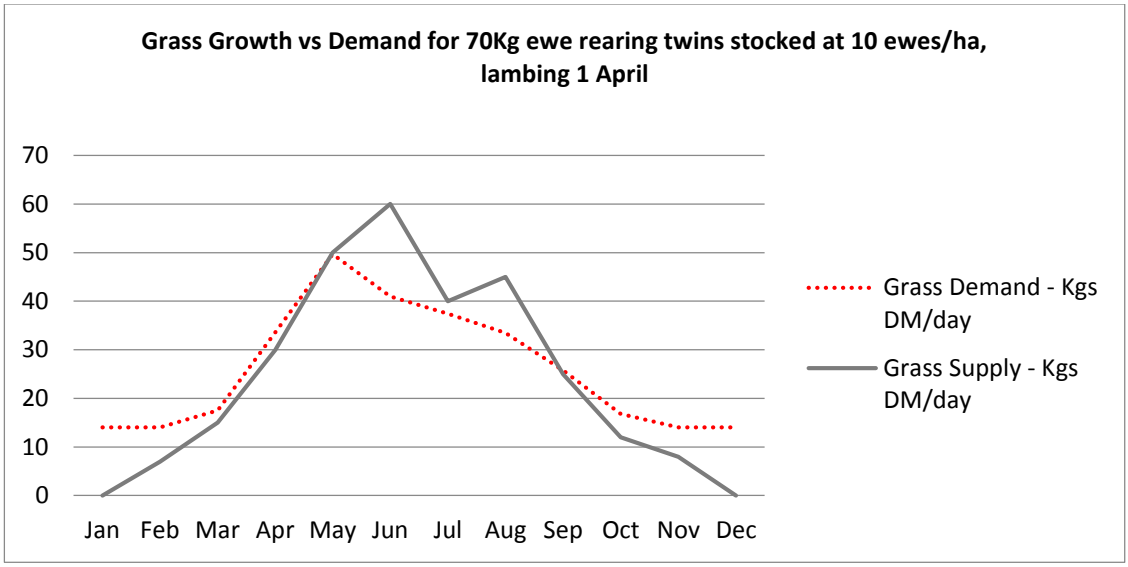
| | Annual grass yield (T DM/ha) | Utilisation (%) | Usable yield (T DM/ha) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Set stocking | 8.0 | 50% | 4.0 |
| Moving stock every 4-7 days | 9.2 | 65% | 6.0 |
| Moving stock every 1-2 days | 10.0 | 85% | 8.5 |

**Livestock Demand -** We know how much dry matter livestock require at different stages of their production cycle. This is linked to their energy needs and liveweight. A 350Kg calf growing at 1kg/head/day requires approximately 2.7% of its bodyweight as dry matter. It therefore needs 350 x 2.7% = 9.45Kgs DM/head.

**Allocation -** the amount of grass made available to a group of livestock. It must be balanced by livestock demand so as not to affect livestock production. For 30 head of 350Kgs calves growing at 1Kg/head/day, they need a total of 30 x 9.45Kgs DM = 283.5Kgs DM/day.

**Budget -** a forward plan to match livestock demands with predicted grass growth to ensure there is sufficient grass coming ahead to meet livestock needs. Budgeting will highlight when surpluses and deficits are likely and allows plans to be made to deal with too much or not enough grass.

**Supply and Demand -** a match between how much grass grows and how much grass is required by livestock. The best systems match supply and demand as closely as possible.




**Swardstick -** a simple tool for measuring grass. Using a ruler and a board, it measures the height of the sward which can be converted to dry matter per hectare.

**Rising plate meter -** a mechanical or electronic piece of kit used in the field for assessing grass yield as dry matter per hectare.

**Grazing platform** - all the pastures of the farm used for grazing.

**Grazing wedge** - the total amount of grass in each of the grazing paddocks/fields presented in an easy to see bar graph by entering grass measurement information into software. It is a tool for planning the grazing available for the next few weeks.

**Digestibility (or D-value) -** is a measure of grass quality. It is the proportion of forage that can be digested by livestock and is made up of crude protein, carbohydrates and lipids. Largely influenced by plant maturity; leafy grass has a good D value, usually over 70. Old stemmy grass has a poor D value, usually less than 65.

**ME (Metabolisable Energy) -** is the predicted amount of energy an animal can use from the diet it is fed, expressed in mega joules/kg. 11.5 to 12 ME is an excellent energy content; under 10 ME is poor.

**Set stocking/continuous grazing –** a system where an area is grazed by a group of livestock all season.

**Rotational grazing -** a system where stock is moved around fields (which are sometimes further split into paddocks) every few days.

**Paddock grazing** - a system where livestock graze a small area for a short period (one to two days)**.**

**Techno grazing** - high intensity rotational grazing usually using “lanes” where an allocation can be made each day depending on cover. Lots of small mobs in small paddocks.