

Dairy

Spring Grazing Rotation Planner



January 2010

Well controlled grazing management during springtime will set up your farm for excellent milk production from grazed grass for the remainder of the year. The Spring Grazing Rotation Planner will take the guesswork out of grazing management and ensure that your first rotation does not end before your target date. This will be approximately April 5 in the south and seven to ten days later on northern or wetter farms.

- Get cows out to grass by February 1.
- Implement the following grazing plan.
- Allocate the appropriate proportion of the farm each day during spring regardless of location, stocking rate or calving pattern.

My grazing platform = _____ Hectares (or acres)

Complete the number of Ha (or acres) that **should** be grazed each week in the table below before you start grazing this spring.

Table 1: Daily spring grazing area allocation.

Week start date	Fraction of farm grazed per day	No. of Ha (or acres) that should be grazed each day*	% of total farm area to be grazed at weekend	No. of Ha (or acres) that should be grazed each week	No. of Ha (or acres) that you actually grazed each week
February 1	$\frac{1}{100}$		7		
February 8	$\frac{1}{92}$		15		
February 15	$\frac{1}{84}$		23		
February 22	$\frac{1}{76}$		32		
March 1	$\frac{1}{68}$		43		
March 8	$\frac{1}{60}$		54		
March 15	$\frac{1}{51}$		68		
March 22	$\frac{1}{43}$		84		
March 29	$\frac{1}{35}$		100		
April 5	$\frac{1}{27}$		Begin rotation 2		
April 12	$\frac{1}{19}$		-		

*For example: for a 50 cow herd with 50 grazing acres, 0.5 acres (50 acres divided by 100) or 2000m² (20ha =200,000 m² divided by 100) should be allocated to the herd each day during the first week of February. *Multiply by 10,000 to bring ha to square metres.*

For the plan to be successful, the following is required:

- stick to the target area; do not graze more or less per day;
- have 33% of the farm grazed by March 1. Turn out more stock (e.g., replacements or dry cows) if you are not going to reach this target;
- a strip wire must be used to allocate grass on a 12-hour basis in blocks;
- grazing area should be back fenced in wet weather to avoid damage;
- cows should be housed after three hours of grazing during inclement conditions without silage; and,
- graze the paddocks out as tight as possible to 3.5-4cm.

Contact your Teagasc Adviser if you have any queries on this planner.
Further details and weekly updates are available on <http://www.teagasc.ie>