



January 2013

Spring Grazing Rotation Planner



Manage grazing properly through the spring and you can get excellent milk production from grazed grass for the rest of the year.

Well controlled grazing management during the 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.

■ Get cows out to grass by February 1.

- Implement your spring rotation grazing plan.
- Allocate the appropriate proportion of the farm each day during spring regardless of location, stocking rate or calving pattern.
- Aim to have one-third of the available area grazed by the end of February, two-thirds by mid March and the first rotation completed by early April.

Name: Discussion group: Year:

Table 1: Daily spring grazing area allocation.

Week start date	Fraction of farm to be grazed per day	No. of Ha (or acres) that should be grazed each day*
February 1	$\frac{1}{100}$	
February 8	$\frac{1}{92}$	
February 15	$\frac{1}{84}$	
February 22	$\frac{1}{76}$	
March 1	$\frac{1}{68}$	
March 8	$\frac{1}{60}$	
March 15	$\frac{1}{51}$	
March 22	$\frac{1}{43}$	
March 29	$\frac{1}{35}$	
April 5	$\frac{1}{19}$	

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.

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.

Week end date	Fraction of farm grazed by week end date	No. of Ha (or acres) that should be grazed each week	No. of Ha (or acres) that you actually grazed each week
February 7	$\frac{7}{100}$		
February 14	$\frac{14}{100}$		
February 21	$\frac{22}{100}$		
February 28	$\frac{32}{100}$		
March 7	$\frac{43}{100}$		
March 14	$\frac{54}{100}$		
March 21	$\frac{68}{100}$		
March 28	$\frac{84}{100}$		
April 4	$\frac{100}{100}$		
Begin rotation 2			

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;
 - alternatively, graze paddocks with low grass covers in February to achieve the 33% target;
- a strip wire must be used to allocate grass on a 12-hour basis in blocks;
 - have 66% of the farm grazed by St Patrick's Day;
 - 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.



Graze paddocks with low grass covers in February to achieve the target of having 33% of the farm grazed by March 1.

For further information on any issues raised in this newsletter, or to access other enterprise newsletters, please contact your local Teagasc adviser or see www.teagasc.ie.