

UNIT : GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

STAFF

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Unit is to highlight the potential of grass in beef systems. Well managed grassland can easily meet the nutritional requirements of beef cattle without the need for alternative or purchased feeds.

On completion of the Unit students will be able to define the role of good grassland management and to outline the key components of grass production and its utilisation by grazing and conservation.

KEY WORDS

PASTURE TYPES

- **Grasses** – perennial ryegrass, Italian ryegrass, meadow fescue, timothy and cocksfoot
- **Legumes** –white clover, red clover – is a shorter lived but more productive legume that can be grown with grasses such as Italian ryegrass for high silage yields or on its own, where silage aftermaths can provide an excellent finishing diet for cattle and lambs in late summer and autumn.

WEED CONTROL

PASTURE MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENT

- Reseeding – opportunities to tackle weeds, capitalise on the attributes of improved varieties, improve grassland quality and palatability and reduce fertiliser use through introducing clover
- Improved management alone can often bring about dramatic improvements with the emphasis on drainage and soil compaction, soil fertility, grazing and weed control

FERTILISER AND MANURE

- Soil fertility –sampling and testing to determine pH and levels of phosphate and potash.
- Manures
- Fertiliser

- Nitrogen
- Phosphate and potash

GRAZING

- Target grazing heights
- Mixed grazing

SILAGE OR HAY

- Harvesting date and silage quality
- Harvesting technique – wilting, additive – consider the use of an additive for high quality material only, sealing, protection
- Feeding

ALTERNATIVE OR COMPLEMENTARY CROPS

- Cereals
- Roots
- Leafy brassicas

RESOURCES

EBLEX (2006) Beef Action for Profit 16 – Better Returns from Conserved Forage

EBLEX (2010) Improving Pasture for Better Returns; Beef and Sheep BRP Manual 1

EBLEX (2010) Improving Soils for Better Returns; Beef and Sheep BRP Manual 3

EBLEX (2010) Managing Clover for Better Returns; Beef and Sheep BRP Manual 4

HCC (2008) Grassland Management

HCC / EBLEX / QMS (2009) Grassland Management DVD

www.fwi.co.uk/landing-page/livestock/grasswatch/

LEARNING ACTIVITIES