1. Rotational grazing systems (establishment and management)

Need / issue: Grazing and grassland management

Aim: To demonstrate how to set up and manage rotational grazing systems

Description:

- Set stocking or continuous grazing systems are commonly operated on many sheep farms; sheep graze the same grassland area throughout the grazing season
- Rotational grazing systems involve dividing the grassland area into a number of paddocks, which are then grazed, fertilised and rested in turn. Higher levels of herbage utilisation can be achieved
- Rotational grazing systems facilitate
 - more control on grazing management
 - surplus grass to be harvested in times of excess production
 - the production of high feed value silage
 - creep grazing with lambs later in season
 - a more targeted fertiliser programme

How to implement:



- A simple 5 paddock rotational grazing system should be used which can also be split temporarily as required to provide up to 10 divisions per grazing group.
- Aim to graze a paddock in 3 days and rest for approximately 21 days in mid-season.
- Calculate ideal paddock size based on 3 days grazing per group e.g. suggested paddock size per 100 ewes = 2ha but plan to temporarily divide into two 1 ha divisions for main grazing season.
- Permanent fences can consist of sheep net wire topped with an electric or barbed wire strand, or 5 strands of electrified high tensile wire.

- Temporary fencing options include
 - plastic posts with 3-4 strands of polywire or tape on reels/geared reels
 - smartfence; plastic posts and geared reel with 4 wires included
 - electric sheep netting
- If a mains electric supply is not available then battery fencers or solar fencers can be used. Note the battery output and what area/length of fencing it will cover.
- Water troughs should be strategically placed between paddocks, if some paddocks do not have a water supply then temporary options such as water tanks/barrels/IBC can be used.

Expected benefits: Higher grass production, increased sward quality and high feed value silage produced, all of which increase animal performance and can reduce feed costs.

Prerequisites and/or limits:

- Need to invest in fencing, gates and water troughs for this system
- Need to know when sheep need to be moved and when grass should be grazed

Topic:

	Health
Х	Nutrition
	Management

Level of solution:

X Practical

Country: Ireland

Dairy or/and meat sheep: Meat

Category of Animal (ewe, replacement, lamb): All

Source of information: (organisation, reference, web link etc)

- Setting up https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2018/Sheep-grazing-infrastructure-guide.pdf
- Advantages <u>https://www.teagasc.ie/news--events/daily/sheep/advantages-of-</u> rotational-grazing-systems-for-sheep.php
- Fencing options https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sJzo4gGQ0U
- Rotational grazing https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xc9fdk2q6d4

Attachment

Related Tips and Tricks: