

## Difficult Conditions

- Grass growth is reduced due to wet weather and cold nights.
- Many farms have very little grass ahead of cows.
- Soils are wet , poaching is widespread and stock are being housed.
- More concentrate is being fed and silage is being reintroduced to fill cows.
- Maintain rotation length around 21 days.
- Provide multiple paddock access points to reduce tracking and poaching.
- Use the strip wire to budget and allocate what grass is available.

## Grass Allocation - Effect on Performance

If 50 cows are turned into a one Hectare ( 2.47 acres ) paddock with a cover of 800 kgs of grass dry matter for one day , they will eat around 12 kgs of grass dry matter , when the paddock is grazed down to 4 cm . When grazed down to 4 cm , roughly 200 kgs of DM per Hectare will remain on the paddock , at this point the paddock is grazed out.  
( The sum is 800 kgs minus 200 kgs equals 600 kgs divided by 50 cows equals 12 kgs of DM )  
A cow yielding 6 gallons requires at least 18 kgs of Dry Matter to feed her properly .  
If she is getting 12 kgs of Dry Matter from grass , she needs the remaining 6 kgs of Dry Matter to come from concentrate and indoor forage.  
If the 6 kgs of dry matter is not filled performance drops and animal welfare declines.

- Grazing Low Covers - Less than 800 kgs DM or Less than 8 centimeters in height
- When grass is scarce and not enough concentrate or fodder is fed milk proteins drop.
  - Milk yield also reduces , cow body condition and fertility both suffer.
  - Milk butterfat percentage also decreases because the diet is too low in fibre.
  - Feed long fibre , for example either clean staw , hay or high dry matter baled silage.
  - Feed a concentrate high in digestible fibre.

- Grazing Ideal Covers - Around 1200 kgs DM or Around 12 centimeters in height
  - Ideal covers are not easy to achieve due to fluctuations in growth rates.
  - Milk yield and milk protein levels are improved.
  - It is also very hard to get a 6 gallon cow to eat 18 kgs of dry matter from grass alone.
  - Some concentrate will be required to reach the 18 kgs of dry matter intake.
  - Offering some long fibre will prevent low milk butterfat percentage.
  
- Grazing High Covers - Greater than 1600 kgs DM or Greater than 16 centimeters
  - Grazing high cover , low leaf and high fibre grass will restrict intake and performance.
  - Milk yield and milk protein levels will decrease , while milk butterfat levels increase.
  - As intake is reduced due to high stem levels , body condition will come under stress.
  - Ideally high covers should be skipped and taken out as high dry matter baled silage.
  - If forced to graze high covers due to poor growth , concentrate will be required.

Grass utilisation and intake are reduced due to difficult weather and ground conditions.

Balanced supplementation is a key element of good grassland management.