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Guidelines for Cover/LU, AFC and Rotation Length

Date	Cover/LU Kg DM	Average Farm Cover (AFC) Kg DM/Ha	Rotation Length Days
STOCKING RATE OF 2.5 LU/HA			
1 st February	360	900	100
1 st March	280	700	50
4 th April	200	500	18-26
May, June, July	170	425	18-24
Mid - August	200	500	25
1 st September	300	750	30
Mid-September	400-450	1,000-1,100	35
1 st October	400	1,000	40
1 st November	60% of your grazing platform should be closed for Spring at this stage		
Fully Housed		550-600	
STOCKING RATE OF 3.0 LU/HA			
1 st February	330	1000	100
1 st March	250	750	50
4 th April	185	550	18-26
May, June, July	170	510	18-24
Mid - August	250	750	25
1 st September	330	990	30
Mid-September	370	1100	35
1 st October	380	1150	40
1 st November	65% of your grazing platform should be closed for Spring at this stage		
Fully Housed		600-650	
STOCKING RATE OF 3.5 LU/HA			
1 st February	285	1000	100
1 st March	230	800	50
4 th April	185	650	18-26
May, June, July	170	600	18-24
Mid - August	220	770	25
1 st September	280	980	30
Mid-September	340	1200	35
1 st October	335	1175	40
1 st November	70% of your grazing platform should be closed for Spring at this stage		
Fully Housed		700-750	

What is Cover/LU?

Cover/LU is AFC divided by the stocking rate on the farm. Cover/LU is used to compare farms with varying stocking rates. Sometimes this is referred to as Cover/Cow i.e. a cow is one livestock unit. This parameter is primarily used in the summer between April and August.

What is Average Farm Covers?

Average Farm Cover (AFC) is the average amount of grass on each hectare of the farm and is expressed in kilograms of dry matter per hectare (kg DM/Ha). To calculate the average farm cover multiply the paddock area by the cover in each paddock, for all paddocks measured during a walk, and then divide by the total Ha of all paddocks measured.

Average farm cover is an important parameter in the spring and autumn. Typically AFC is high in early spring and reduces as you end the first rotation in April. Between April and August, AFC needs to be maintained. From late August to September AFC is increased in order that this extra grass can be grazed in October and November when demand is higher than growth.

What is Rotation Length?

The Rotation length is the number of days it takes the herd to rotationally graze the whole farm. Rotation length can be calculated by dividing the total area available for grazing by the number of hectares grazed per day.