

Autumn Rotation Planner

The autumn rotation planner is a tool to help extend the grazing season into late autumn and, if followed it will ensure that paddocks are set up correctly for grazing the following spring. The 60:40 plan is based on having proportions of the farm closed by certain dates. These dates will vary slightly across the country and depend on soil type and the amount of grass that is likely to grow over the winter. The 60:40 autumn rotation plan will not tell you if you are grazing paddocks that have too much grass and it will not tell you if you are not achieving desired post-grazing residuals. You will have to gauge that by walking through your paddocks or fields and assessing either visually or by measuring.

The objectives of the autumn rotation planner are:

- To keep grass in the diet of the cattle for as long as possible.
- To set up paddocks for grazing the following spring.

The simple rule is:

Dry farms – start closing 10 October; 60% of the farm grazed by first week November; remaining 40% grazed by 1 December.

Heavy or slow grass growing farms – start closing 1 October; 60% of the farm grazed by 20 October; remaining 40% grazed by mid-November.

If you want to make best use of grass as a feed for your cattle, you need to walk your grazing area on a weekly basis.

Autumn grazing - objectives

- Keep grass in the diet for as long as possible this autumn.
- Allocate a portion of the farm for grazing each week.
- Start closing paddocks from the 10th October onwards (1-2 weeks earlier in wet areas).
- Aim to have 60% farm closed by the end of the first week of November (1-2 weeks earlier in wet areas).
- Leave the grazing area with an “adequate grass cover” when the cattle are housed.

The key to providing grass for your cattle next spring is to graze 60% of your grazing area by end of the first week of November. The paddocks grazed by this date will have an opportunity to grow grass before growth rates decline in November.