

A Grazing & Stock Management

Total score A: /65
(sum of A1 to A5)

A1 What is the grazing level? <i>(relates to the most recent winter grazing period, but also covers any summer grazing).</i>	Under-grazed	Significantly below: Grazing largely confined to a few easily accessible, palatable areas but even these are poorly grazed with plenty of forage left. Less palatable areas not or barely grazed at all, generally with high levels of litter accumulating. Areas of rank vegetation present with negligible signs of grazing.	-25
		Below optimum: Less than half of the grazeable area in field fairly well grazed, e.g. some easily grazed, palatable areas well grazed but others with plenty of forage left and grazing levels elsewhere negligible or relatively low.	-5
		Slightly below: More than half of grazeable area in field well grazed, e.g. palatable areas well grazed but rest only fairly well grazed at best.	0
		Generally good: Generally good over the majority, but still slightly below optimum in some areas, which may be as a result of a lack of a 'light summer graze' to maintain richer areas.	10
	Over-grazed	Optimum: Sward in good condition throughout, with good structure and an abundance of plants in flower.	15
	Slightly above: Slightly above optimum but otherwise good. Applies mainly to fields grazed tighter than recommended during a 'light summer graze'. Some of the more palatable areas grazed out rather than 'topped' but flowering plants still obvious over much of the field.	5	
	Above optimum: Signs of heavier grazing evident but patchy in distribution. Applies mainly to fields with a tradition of regular and/or light, summer grazing periods where there is a lack of 'green land' on farm. Sward may be short in more palatable areas but flowering heads of plants typical of a wintertime should be common on less grazed areas.	-5	
Significantly above: Sward short throughout with little variation in height of vegetation. Relatively few herbs or grasses seen in flower during May/June/July as grazed off. Site looks 'grassy' rather than 'flowery'. Most flowering herbs are low growing, rosette plants (e.g. daisies). Bare soil visible in areas.	-35		
A2 What is the litter level? <i>(this complements the A1 grazing level assessment).</i>	Low <10%: Litter rare, being very sparse and scattered across the grazeable area.	20	
	10-25%: Mostly just present in some less palatable or more remote grazeable areas.	15	
	>25-50%: Thatch forming some continuous patches but still mostly in the less palatable areas.	10	
	>50-75%: Thatch and/or dead-standing vegetation frequent, forming large, continuous patches.	5	
	High >75%: Litter dominant, forming a more or less continuous layer across most of the grazeable area.	0	
A3a Is there damage at feed sites and/or water troughs? <i>(see guidance to aid with assessment).</i>	Low: Low impact (if any) associated with supplementary feed sites and/or water troughs.	15	Comments:
	Low-med: Impact between Low & Medium.	10	
	Medium: Medium impact associated with supplementary feed sites and/or water troughs.	5	
	Med-high: Impact between Medium & High.	0	
	High: High impact associated with supplementary feed sites and/or water troughs.	-5	
A3b Have round bales of silage been fed in the field? <i>(see guidance to aid with assessment).</i>	No: 0 Yes: -60	<i>If yes; please note the location and level of silage feeding in the comment box, and consult with CP team if needed for additional advice on assessment.</i>	
A4 Is there damage* at natural water sources? <i>*Where relevant, also assess the level of risk to the quality of natural water bodies within, adjacent to and downstream of the field due to pressures relating to flow, sediment, nutrients or other pollutants - the 'source-pathway-receptor' model should inform the assessment (see guidance).</i>	None present: No natural water sources/water bodies present.	15	
	No damage/risk: No associated damage/risk present.	15	
	Low: See guidance to inform assessment.	10	
	Moderate: See guidance to inform assessment.	5	
	High: See guidance to inform assessment.	-10	
A5 What is the extent of bare soil and erosion?	Low: Bare soil more or less restricted to regular stock paths, 'pinch' points & small congregation areas. No soil loss.	0	
	Low-med: Extent between Low & Medium.	-5	
	Medium: Bare soil mainly along regularly used stock routes or congregation areas, with minor soil loss occurring at a few points. Bare soil may extend a short distance beyond the main feed site and/or water points. Minor rutting and soil disturbance caused by occasional vehicle/tractor access may be present.	-10	
	Med-high: Extent between Medium & High.	-15	
	High: Excessive areas of bare soil within the body of the field. Bare soil may also be extending out significantly from the main feed sites and/or water troughs, where poaching evident. Significant rutting and soil disturbance caused by vehicle/tractor access.	-20	

B Plant Species that can Threaten Grazed Habitats

Total score B:
(sum of B1 to B5)

/30

B1 What is the extent of spreading immature scrub?

(the % cover of immature scrub should be assessed across the grazeable area of the field, and based on the extent of immature scrub that would be suitable for removal).

Low ≤2%: Cover of immature spreading scrub negligible overall (≤2%); may occur as a few scattered individuals or a couple discrete patches. Low threat posed to species-rich grazeable areas.	15
3-5%: Cover of immature spreading scrub between 3-5%.	10
6-10%: Cover of immature spreading scrub between 6-10%.	5
11-15%: Cover of immature spreading scrub between 11-15%.	0
16-25%: Cover of immature spreading scrub between 16-25%.	-5
High >26%: Cover of immature spreading scrub >26%. Very high impact on species-rich grazeable areas.	-15

B2 What is the impact of/threat from bracken?

Low: If present, generally scattered and short (<0.5m high), and/or restricted to soil filled grikes. Not forming large, closed canopy stands, i.e. very few dense patches >2x2m in body of field.	5
Low-med: Impact between Low & Medium.	0
Medium: Cover of dense, closed canopy stands up to 10% of the assessment area. Average height about 0.75m, with any taller stands restricted to small patches or to a few pockets of deeper soil. Scattered, open-canopy stands otherwise, with less impact on the wider assessment area.	-5
Med-high: Impact between Medium & High.	-10
High: Cover of dense, closed-canopy stands exceeding more than 20% of the assessment area. Stands usually tall with an average height of 1 m or more (waist height), often with a significant bracken litter layer beneath and a suppressed, modified ground flora (more grassy in appearance).	-15

B3 What is the impact of/threat from Molinia? (Purple moor-grass)

Low: Molinia present as a natural part of vegetation (e.g. in association with flushes, limestone heaths). Targeted, light summer grazing preventing it from forming dense stands with a thick litter layer.	5
Low-med: Impact between Low & Medium.	0
Medium: Molinia may be common over more than half of the assessment area but less than 25% of the Molinia has a significant layer of litter beneath (litter patchy & discontinuous). Or, Molinia occurs in discrete pockets/veins, generally with a thick litter layer which is suppressing the growth of other grasses and flowers on approx. 5-10% of the overall grazeable area.	-5
Med-high: Impact between Medium & High.	-10
High: Molinia common over more than half of the assessment area with old leaves forming a thick litter layer across more than half of the Molinia area, visibly suppressing the surrounding flora.	-15

B4 What is the cover of weed species present due to management practices?

Low: Weeds absent or rare across the field. Some may be present in very localised and confined areas (e.g. wall bands, shelter spots). Cover of weeds negligible overall.	5
Low-med: Weeds occasional. Generally restricted to wall bands, shelter spots and/or around feeders/water troughs where they may be quite common. Weeds occasional at old, disused silage feed sites. Cover of weeds negligible within body of field.	0
Medium: Weeds relatively common along wall bands, by shelter spots and occasionally extending 5-10m out from these. Weeds may still be relatively common on, and extend out from, old silage feed sites, but are decreasing. Weeds can occur as scattered individuals throughout the field or located in a few patches. Cover of weeds <2% of grazeable area.	-5
Med-high: Cover of weeds outside of wall bands, shelter spots and current feed sites between 2-10% of the grazeable area. Significant cover of weeds still associated with old feed sites.	-10
High: Weeds obvious throughout the field or numerous, large dense patches present. Cover of weeds >10% of grazeable area.	-15

B5 What is the cover of non-native invasives?

None: No non-native invasive species present.	0
Red valerian only: Only red valerian present.	0

Main weed types (tick): Docks Ragwort Thistles
 Perennial Rye-grass Nettles Other weeds

Slight/Low. -5 Moderate. -10 Severe/High. -20

Non-native invasives (tick if present): Cotoneaster Traveller's-joy Red valerian Other (specify):

C Ecological & Site Integrity

Total score C:
(sum of C1 + C2)

/5

C1 Does the field retain its ecological integrity, in terms of the typical plant communities present?

(see guidance to inform assessment)

Typical flora	5
Very slightly modified	0
Slightly modified	-5
Moderately modified	-15
Significantly modified	-25

C2 Is there any evidence of damaging activities to habitat, vegetation, or archaeology?

(note the location, & consult with CP team if needed for additional advice on assessment)

Damaging activities: (tick relevant damage & describe in comments)

Quarrying Burning
 Dumping
 Boundary damage
 Damage to archaeological features Other (please specify):
 Removal of mature scrub/trees

Comments:

None: No damaging activities.	0
Low: Damage occurring across a small area (≤5%) or of a minor nature if confined.	-5
Moderate: Damage occurring across a moderate area (≥6-20%) or of a moderate nature if confined.	-15
High: Damage occurring across a large area (≥21%) or of a serious nature if confined.	-25

