

Determining optimum grazing rotations to perennial pastures



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Project Description

Perennial pastures will not persist, or produce, if grazed inappropriately. It is generally agreed that perennial pastures do better under rotational grazing than set stocking. The question is about how intensive the rotational grazing should be. Some farmers are following the Savoury method that advocates at least 20 paddocks in a rotation. Are simpler, and cheaper, rotations adequate? This project will use the 'nested cell' design to determine the optimum rotation at two perennial grass and one salt land perennial pasture paddocks. In this trial design one large paddock is split in smaller paddocks that vary in size. One mob of animals is then rotated through all the cells but the amount of time in each is proportional to the size of that cell. This means that each cell gets exactly the same grazing days (i.e. stocking rate), but different grazing durations and intensities. This trial design will compare a wide range of rotation intensities (i.e. set stocking, 2 paddock, 4 paddock, 8 paddock64 paddock rotation). The grazing rotation treatments will be assessed in terms of perennial persistence and productivity. This trial will provide the basis for advice on grazing management to farmers. The first two sites (perennial grass) were set up in 2006, and the third site (salt bush) is planned for 2006/07.

Delivery Organisation: Department of Agriculture and Food

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