

# Maximising pasture utilisation

## Summary

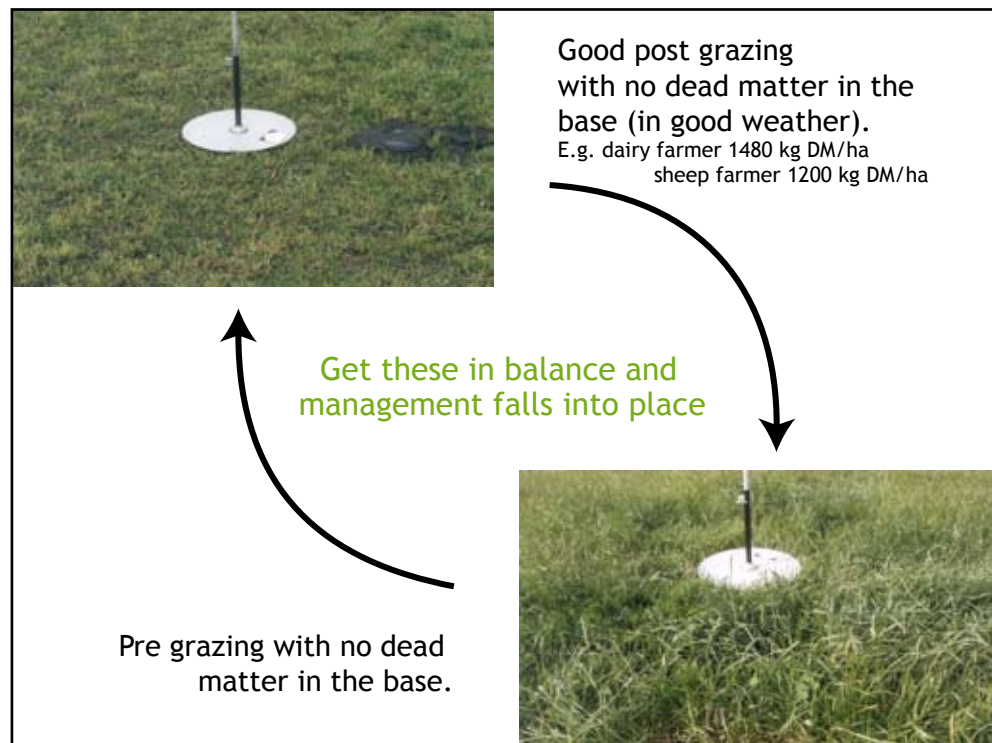
- A big challenge on-farm is pasture utilisation - getting animals to eat as much as possible of what is grown.
- To achieve this farmers need to focus on the post grazing residual.

## What is possible?

Typical utilisation of our dairy pastures is believed to be 50-70% eaten of DM grown, with top operators reaching 75-85%. The utilisation achievable is also affected by conditions, it is highest on free draining soils, and poorest during wet weather.

## How can utilisation be improved?

Focus on what's left after grazing, the post-grazing residual. If farmers get this right, they are harvesting a high amount of pasture, and equally important leaving the paddock in the right state to regrow leafy, quality grass for the next grazing.



## Achieving the right residual

Graze at the right time, before the pasture loses quality at the base, it's all high ME feed. With the right stocking rate animals will graze to the right residual, perform well and achieve the high utilisation needed to make the pasture system efficient.

## Residuals in bad weather

In wet weather, particularly on heavy soils, achieving low residuals is not always possible. In these cases the priority should be to avoid pugging and if necessary accept a higher residual. But it is important to focus back onto residual, as soon as weather allows.