

## NE Organic Discussion Group

# Newsletter



## May 2021

Welcome to the May edition of the Newsletter. The weather has been quite a contrast to last year and I think everyone is hoping for some hot and dry weather.

Now that IACS is past I will make a start organising our virtual farm tour. I am sorry this months Newsletter is again quite short and there are even very few events to promote at the moment.

This month I got Poppy Frater a senior specialist in our livestock team to write an article on grazing.

## Grazing 2021

Grass growth has been slow across Scotland this year due to low temperatures and the dry start. This is where grass is most valuable, at face value the cost of grass amounts to 6p/ kilogram dry matter (kg DM), however currently, it is worth far more due to high demand and expensive alternatives.

When grass is in short supply, we prioritise it to the stock that need it most; the stock that can be sold this year and ease pressure on the farm – lambs and finishing cattle. For lambs, consider weaning early so that they can be prioritised for the good grass. They can be weaned from 8 to 14 weeks old, however, the earlier they are weaned, the greater the risk of a growth rate check. Those weaning from 8 weeks will benefit from removing the ewe competition for good grass but will need to minimise stress and maximise grass quality for the lambs to minimise the check. Finishing stock should not graze below 5cm and should be on the best grass there is to offer. If grass supplies are tight, it might be worth selling livestock lighter than normal.

Rotational grazing is the best way to make the grass go further. Even bringing two groups of animals together and moving between two fields increases the grass utilisation. The stock benefit from the regular provision of fresh grass and the land benefits from regular rest periods and more even grazing. Grazing at 8-10cm and moving on at 5cm is best for the priority livestock. For those set stocking, maintaining grass in the 6-8cm sweet spot is ideal.

Thinking longer term, take stock of how the breeding animals are doing; we do not want the 2021 conditions to impact 2022 performance. Those that are lean become greater priority through the summer into the autumn.

If you have any questions or would like any advice, please get in touch.



## Reminder

Do not forget the AECS deadline including organic conversion and maintenance applications is 30th June 2021.

For more information or if you have any questions please get in touch.