Adding value to the best ground

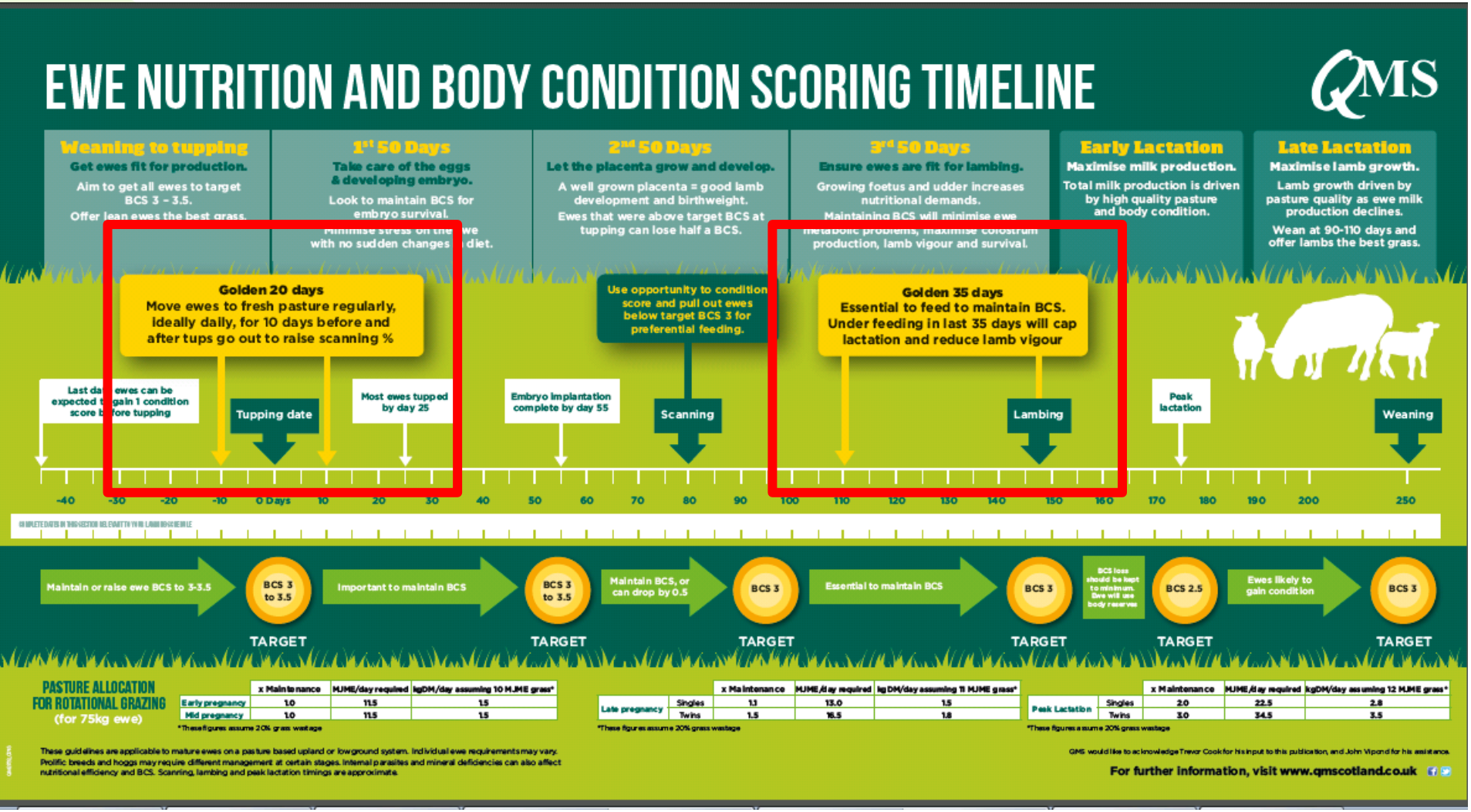
SAC Consulting: Poppy Frater

SAC Consulting is a division of SRUC

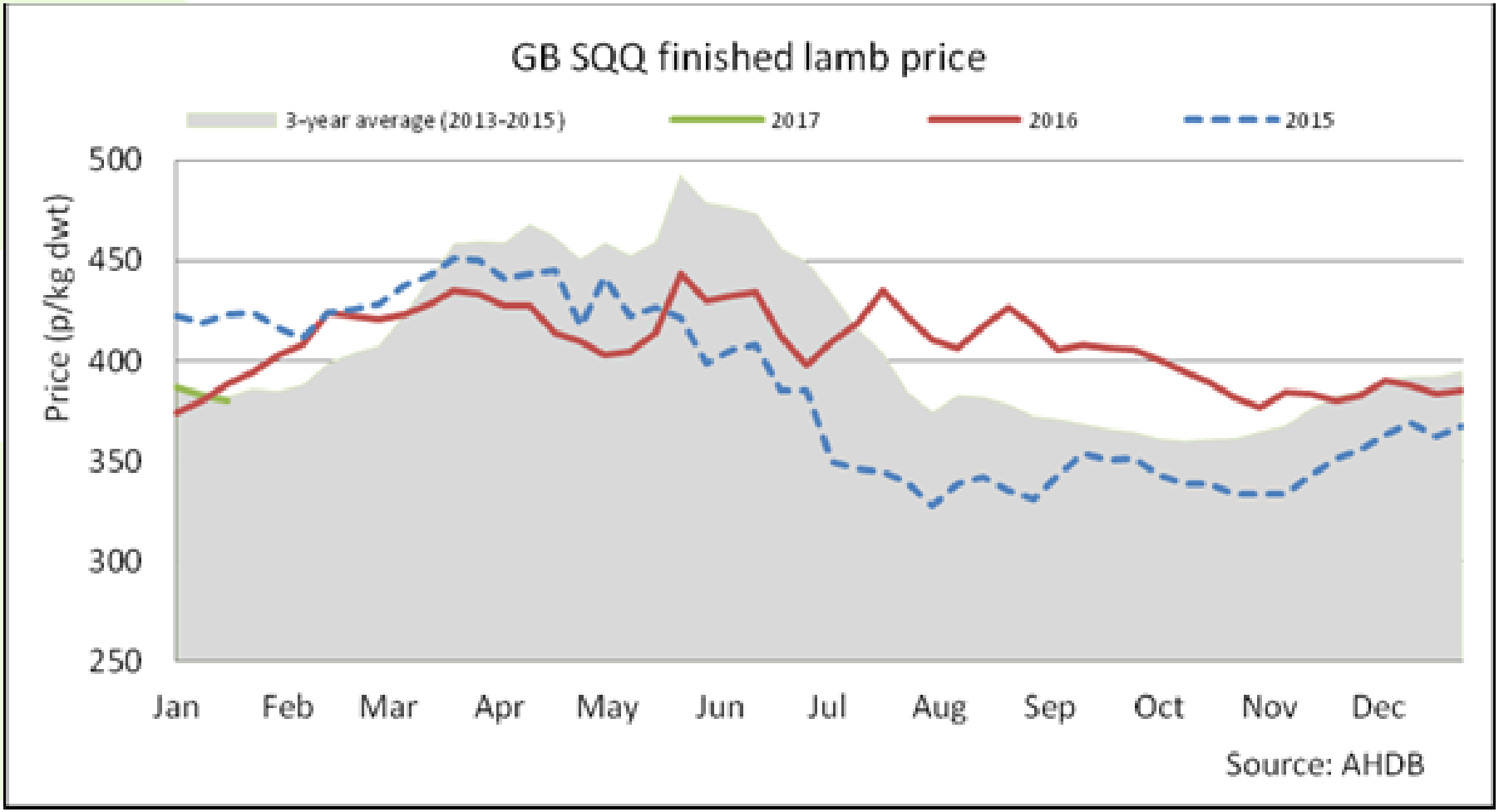
Leading the way in Agriculture and Rural Research, Education and Consulting

Improving the land that is improvable

SAC CONSULTING



Why?


GB SQQ finished lamb price
3-year average (2013-2015)
2017
2016
2015
Price (p/kg dwt)
500
450
400
350
300
250
Jan
Feb
Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec
Source: AHDB

Three ways to improve pasture quality

In order of priority…

1. Focus on soil health
2. **Rotational grazing**
3. Reseed

The rotational grazing double whammy effect…

System	Annual Yield (t DM/ha)	Utilisation (%)	Usable yield (t DM/ha)	Percentage increase
Set stocking	8.5 (modest)	50	4.3	

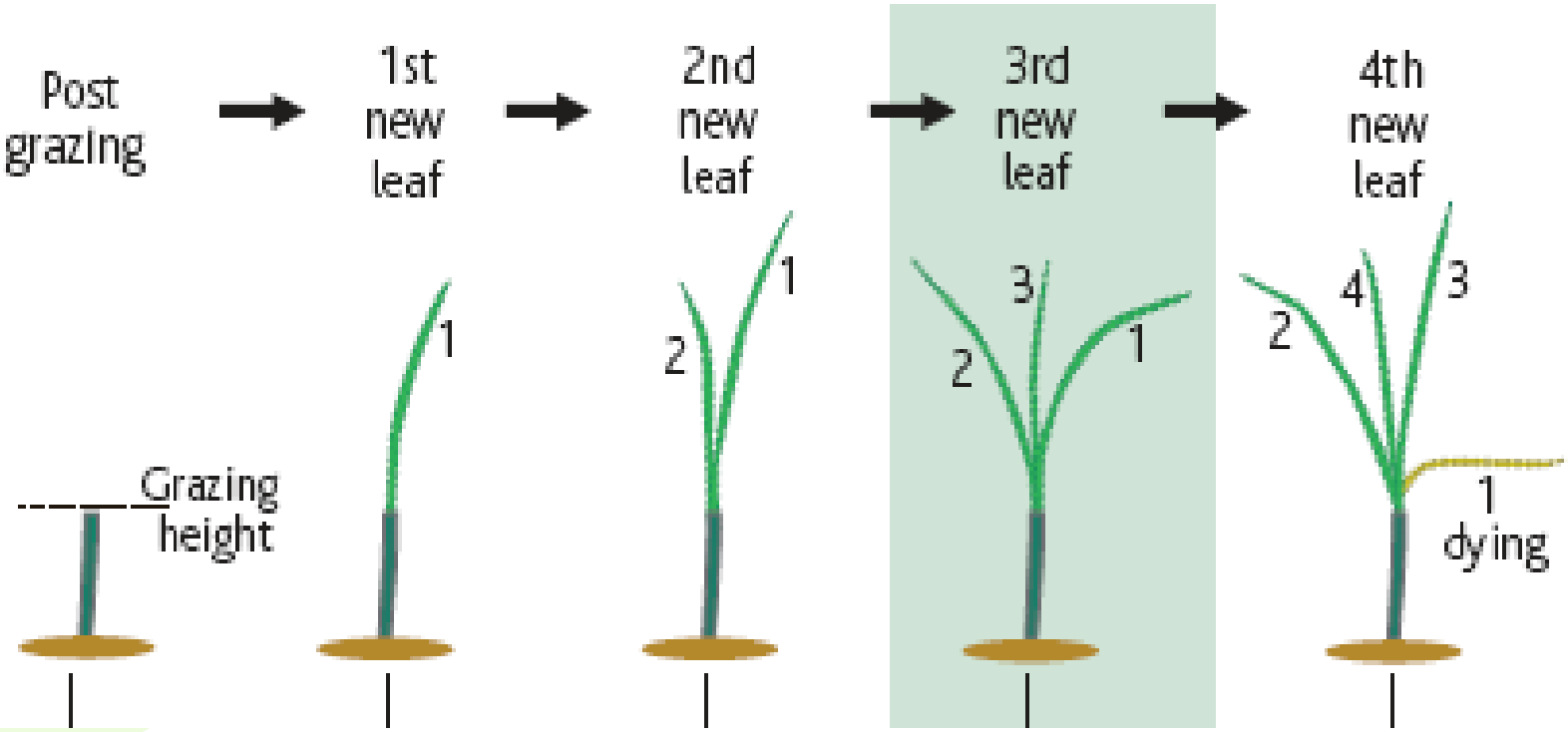
Plus improved quality…triple whammy

Leaf 11.5 MJ ME/kg DM

Stems 10.5 MJ ME/kg DM

Dead leaves <8 MJ ME/kg DM

Optimising grazing timing



Timing… return to the first field

Depend on grass growth, but generally..

- Spring – 15-20 days
- Summer– 25 days
- Autumn – 30-40 days
- Winter – 90-100 days

How?

1. Calculate feed supply
2. Daily flock/herd requirements
3. Supply ÷ Daily requirement = days of feed available

Feed supply

Measure: Kilograms of Dry matter (DM)

- Sward sticks
- Plate meters

Deduct: what you want to leave behind ~1500 kg DM/ha

Daily flock requirements

A 70 kg ewe in late pregnancy requires:

0.02 (2%) x 70 = 1.4 kgDM/head/day

Flock size is 200, therefore need 280 kg DM/day

Source: AHDB Beef and Lamb BRP Planning Grazing strategies for Better Returns

Example

8ha
DM

Dec

Ava

Allo
wei

DM

DM

y

ay

Now I know how many days of feed, I can set up electric-fenced paddocks:

- Split field in half, move after 12 days
- Split into 5 and move every 5 days
- Split into 25 and move every day

Divide available feed by daily allocation = 25 days

Winter Rotational Grazing

The practise

- Field selection
  - Consider soil types
  - Aspect
  - Pasture quality
- Slopes
- Accounting for poorer quality


MULE
4010
Kawasa

Electric fencing options

- Power source
- Energiser
- Wire
- Posts
- No. of strands
- Voltage
- Ease of use
- Permanent vs. temporary

Electric fencing for livestock

Better Returns Programme

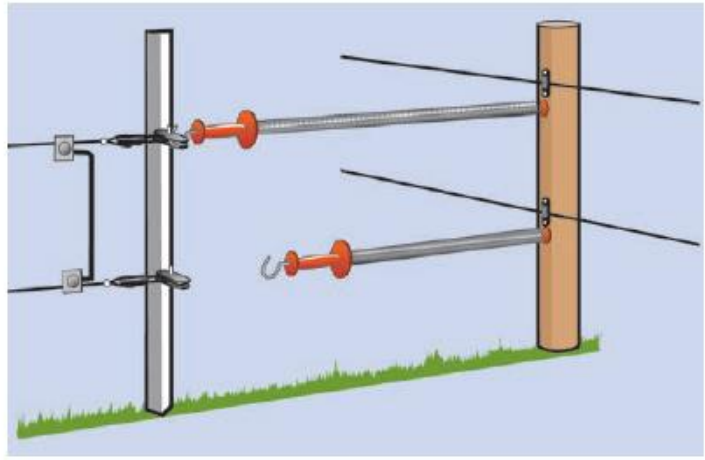
Information compiled by Katie Brian and Dr Liz Genever, AHDB Beef & Lamb

Key messages

+ Electric fencing allows stocking density to be adjusted so that grazing pressure can be controlled
+ Electric fencing is a crucial part of systems that include rotational grazing, whereby animals move around the farm in an ordered and logical way
+ Electric fencing can also be used to preclude livestock from areas that may prove dangerous or unhealthy
+ Forward planning is essential to save time and energy when it comes to erecting the electric fence
+ There are three types of electric fencing – permanent electric, off conventional and temporary electric. The purchase and erection costs of electric fencing vary significantly
+ A good electric fence system requires a combination of components that all work efficiently in tandem, including an energiser, a power source, an earth system and a conductor
+ Electric fencing requires a change in thinking compared to conventional fencing
+ Training stock can save significant time and hassle when it actually comes to putting them into fields or paddocks bounded by electric fencing

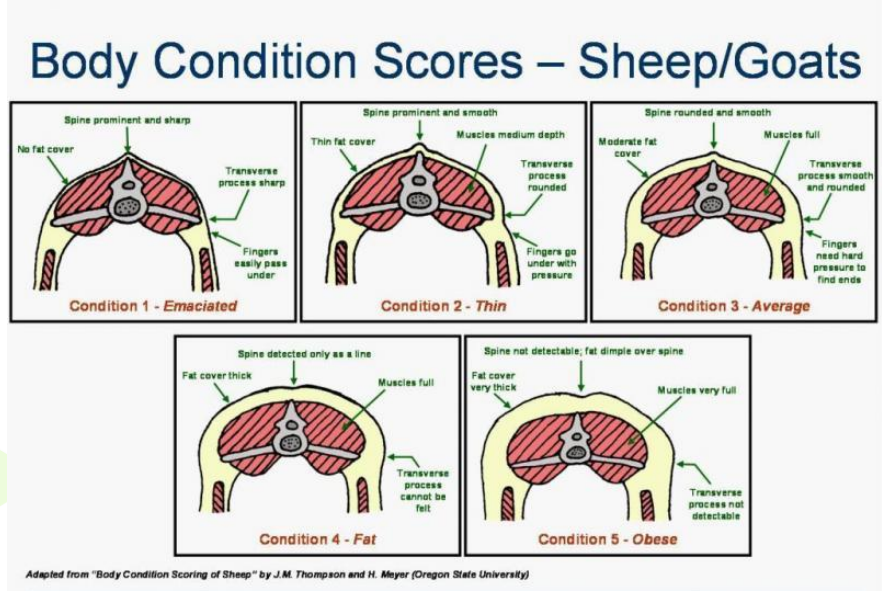
Other considerations

- Gateways
- Training animals
- Water
- Labour



Ground truthing

- Body condition scoring
- Behaviour
- Liveweight gain
- Measure grass left behind



Summary

- Make your best land work harder
- Invest in soils first
- Then consider rotational grazing to improve grass quality and quantity