**A focus on grass**

Since 2012, Charlie and Andrea have focused on grazing management to improve production at Barnside. The results: a 29% increase in stocking rate and 48% greater liveweight production per acre. In the summer, grazing cattle grow 1.25 kg LW/day and weaned lambs grow on average 200g/day. From mid-August to September, the farm sell most young stock to build grass covers for tupping. Feeding ewes optimally during the ‘Golden 20 days’ over tupping is the priority as this will be influential to next year’s lamb crop.

**Farm facts:**

* 625 acres (253 ha) – organic
* 840 EasyCare ewes (average ewe weight: 65kg)
* 84 breeding Welsh Black cows put to Angus sire
* Lambing: April 20th; Calving: April 1st

**Investing in infrastructure for rotational grazing**

Reducing field size can increase grazing pressure and utilisation (grass grown that ends up consumed rather than wasted). Under set stocking, we estimate that 50% of grass is wasted as ewes select the best bits and leave the rest, under rotational grazing wastage is reduced to around 20% as the animals have less opportunity to select and the pasture becomes more uniform. That is a 30% additional feed potential!

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Fields** | **Water Troughs** | **Swing Gates** |  |
| 2001 | 17 | 8 | 2 | Unfenced tracks & farm roads |
| 2014 | 35 | 35 | 150+ | 3 km fenced lanes |

**Temporary Subdivision for Paddock Grazing Project:**

The 35 fields are subdivided into 69 paddocks using 42 x 3 reel temporary electric fencing systems; average paddock size is 7 acres

To service these paddocks 25 additional water troughs were installed and 5.5 kilometres of pipe laid over the ground.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Temporary Subdivision Costs:** | **£** |
| 40 x 3 reel electric fence systems including poly posts & wire gates | 7,537 |
| 25 water troughs | 3,075 |
| 5.5km pipe & fittings (mostly 25 & 32mm,some 50mm) | 4,147 |
| Total for 480 acres | 14,759 |
| **Cost per acre subdivided** | **30.75** |



**Getting started**

Charlie started with All Grass Wintering: rotationally grazing the breeding ewe flock from 2-3 weeks after tupping to three weeks before lambing. Winter is a good time to start rotational grazing as we have more confidence in grass growth estimation (i.e. we know it won’t grow much!) and the ewes can withstand hard rationing. He then started on rotational grazing through the spring, three weeks after lambing.

It is useful to measure grass frequently (every fortnight in the spring as a minimum) to get an understanding of how the paddocks respond to the grazing management. With this measurement, you can understand the pasture available and therefore calculate the feed in a paddock:

Grass cover – residual (grass to leave behind) = available feed.

Available feed/animal demand = days of grazing available

E.g. if grass measured at 2,000 kg DM/ha in a 4 ha field. Target residual is 1,500kg DM/ha, therefore there is 2,000 kg DM available.

Young stock cattle with a target of growing 1.25kg/day require 3% of bodyweight: a 400kg steer requires 16kg DM/day and a herd of 60 requires 960 kg DM/day.

Available feed (2,000kg DM) divided by daily demand (960 kg DM/day) = 2 days