

A Simple Explanation of Time Control Grazing

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This paper is a brief explanation of the concept of Time Control Grazing (TCG), commonly referred to as "Cell Grazing". It is a grazing management method where stock are moved through a number of paddocks at high stock density. This requires at least 7 paddocks/mob, but usually 20-40. Stock moves are based on the growth rate of the pasture and its consequent physiological requirement for rest. It is not cal-

endar based, in the manner of traditional rotational grazing systems.

Aims of Time Control Grazing

TCG aims to improve pasture mass and quality and hence grazing animal performance by manipulating stock density, grazing period and rest period. Four fundamental ecological factors are aimed to be improved:

Succession

To arrest and ultimately reverse the decline in perennial grasses (number and plant vigour) and the associated increase in undesirable annual grasses.

Water cycle

To increase rainfall infiltration into the soil by increasing ground cover, improving plant vigour and encouraging soil fauna activity.

Mineral Cycle

To increase the rate of mineral cycling within the ecosystem by preventing minerals being locked in moribund grass or dung and by improving soil fauna/flora activity.

Energy Flow

To increase the total amount of sunlight energy trapped by the plants by increasing the number of plants, maximising growth period and optimising leaf area.

Principles of Time Control Grazing

There are four basic principles which underpin the Time Control Grazing Method:

1. Stocking rate is adjusted to match carrying capacity.
2. Control of plant recovery time is adjusted to suit

the growth rate of the plant.

3. Short graze periods are used to maximise pasture quality on offer and improve animal performance.
4. High stock density is applied for the minimum period of time.

Advantages and Disadvantages

As in any system, there are advantages and disadvantages to time control grazing. Some of these are shown below:

Advantages

- Improves pasture condition.
- Can increase carrying capacity.
- Allows accurate drought planning.
- Improves animal performance.
- Reduced labour requirements.
- Increase grazing profitability.

Disadvantages

- Needs a high level of management.
- Requires redesigning paddock layout.
- "Holistic" approach is poorly understood.