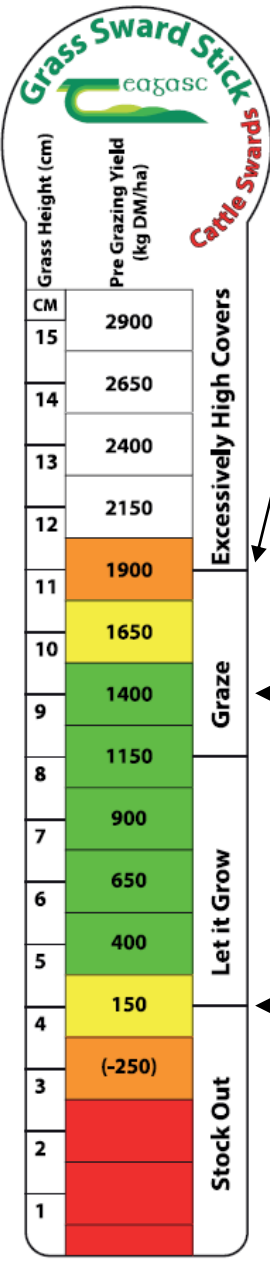


# Cattle Sward Stick Guidelines to use

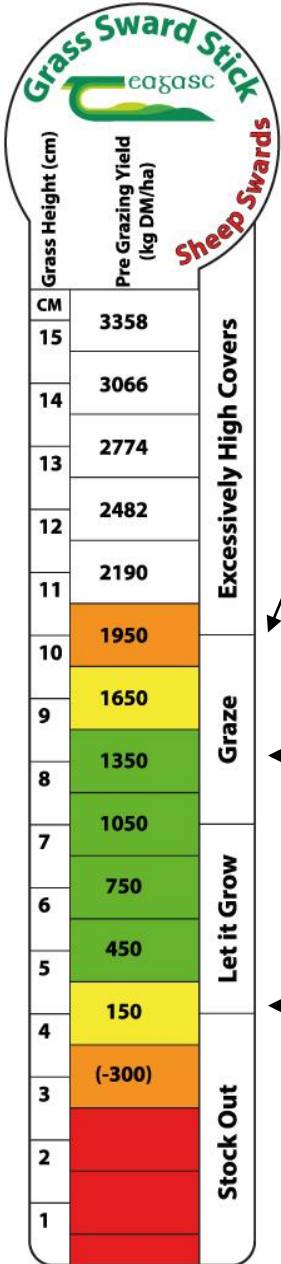


High covers to be removed. Decisions based on farm cover. Late in season can allow to grow to 11cm (1900 kg DM/ha) to extend the grazing rotation.

Allow to grow to 9cm for cattle swards (1400 kg DM/ha). Quality deteriorates rapidly if sward is higher. (Stem and dead leaf)

Graze down to 4 cm. (3.5 cm in spring). Remove animals and allow time for pasture to recover

# Sheep Sward Stick Guidelines to use



High covers to be removed. Decisions based on farm cover. Late in season can allow to grow to 10cm (1950 kg DM/ha) to extend the grazing rotation.

Allow to grow to 8cm for dense sheep swards (1350 kg DM/ha). Quality deteriorates rapidly if sward is higher. (Stem and dead leaf)

Graze down to 4 cm. (3.5 cm in spring). Remove animals and allow time for pasture to recover

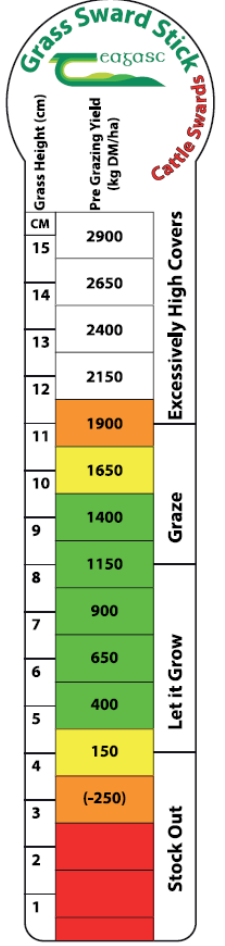
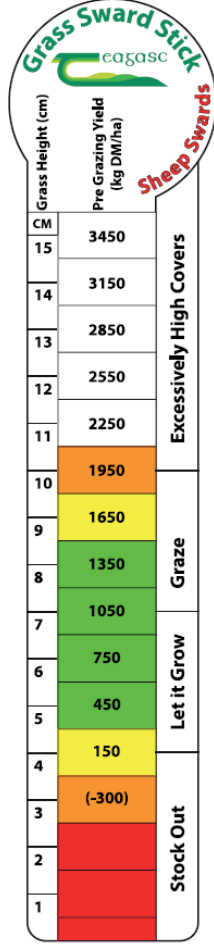


# Grass Measurement using Grass Sward Stick

Prepared by Frank Hynes & Philip Creighton

**Sheep Swards**  
Front of Ruler  
(with bevelled edge)

**Cattle Swards**  
Back of Ruler  
(flat back)



### Step 1: Assessing Grass Covers

- Grass height can be used to estimate grass yield.
- Grass height is measured in centimetres using a Sward Stick. With some experience you can train your eye to measure accurately with the sward stick.
- Grass DM available is read to the nearest centimetre from the corresponding scale on the Sward Stick: Assess each paddock or field & accordingly assign a yield category.
- Use the table below to calculate total grass available

Field No or name	Field area Ha (A)	Grass yield Kg DM /ha (B)	Total kg dm A X B
<b>Total</b>			<b>(A)</b>

**Total farm cover = A = \_\_\_\_\_**

### Step 2: Calculating Sheep Flock Demand

Lactating ewe demand			
Weeks Lambled	Demand per ewe/day (kg DM)	No of ewes	Total Demand /day (Kg DM)
1	2.4		
3	2.4		
5	3.2		
7	3.4		
9	3.0		
14	2.3		<b>(LE)</b>

Suckled lamb demand			
Age of lambs in weeks	Demand per lamb/day (kg DM)	No of Lambs	Total Demand /day (Kg DM)
1	0.0		
3	0.1		
5	0.3		
7	0.5		
9	0.7		
14	1.2		<b>(SL)</b>

Weaned Lambs			
Ave LWT (kg)	Intake 4% of LWT	No of Lambs	Total Demand /day (Kg DM)
			<b>(WL)</b>

During the summer months, even for well managed pasture, there will be some accumulation of stem and dead leaf at the base of the sward. Therefore, to maximise lamb growth after weaning it is advisable to graze no lower 5 to 6 cm with lambs (except for silage aftermath). However, the dry ewes or other livestock should be used to graze the pasture down to 4 cm. This will ensure top quality grass will be available in the regrowth for late summer and autumn.

### Step 3: Dry Matter requirements for all animals:

Demand from cattle should also be counted. In general grass requirement is assumed to be 2% of the animals' liveweight in kg DM / day. Lactating animals and rapidly growing young animals will require more than 2%.

Animals	No.	X	Demand
Lactating Ewes (LE)			
Suckled Lambs (SL)			
Weaned Lambs (WL)			
Dry Ewes		1.5	
Lactating Cows		15	
Dry Cows		10	
Total from other cattle			
<b>Total Demand (Kg DM per day)</b>			<b>(B)</b>

**Total daily demand = B = \_\_\_\_\_**

### Step 4: Calculate days ahead

= A / B = \_\_\_\_\_

**Days ahead** refers to how long the grass that is available at present would last if growth stopped. Target figures are presented in Table 4A. If availability exceeds the target, you are likely to be heading for a surplus grass situation. Consider reducing the cover, possibly by taking out surplus grass in the form of silage. Otherwise quality will deteriorate and animal performance will be poor.

Month	Days ahead
Early May	15
Mid May	12.5
E June	10
M June	10
E July	15
M July	15
E Aug	17
M Aug	17
E Sept	20
M Sept	25
E Oct	30
M Oct	40