



**Rotational grazing systems (establishment and management)**

**Need/issue:** Grazing & grassland management

**Aim:** o demonstrate how to set up and manage rotational grazing systems.

**How to implement:**

- A simple 5 paddock rotational grazing system should be used which can also be split temporarily as required to provide up to 10 divisions per grazing group.
- Aim to graze a paddock in 3 days and rest for approximately 21 days in mid-season.
- Calculate ideal paddock size based on 3 days grazing per group e.g. suggested paddock size per 100 ewes = 2ha but plan to temporarily divide into two 1 ha divisions for main grazing season.
- Permanent fences can consist of sheep net wire topped with an electric or barbed wire strand, or 5 strands of electrified high tensile wire.
- Temporary fencing options include
  - plastic posts with 3-4 strands of polywire or tape on reels/geared reels
  - smartfence; plastic posts and geared reel with 4 wires included
  - electric sheep netting



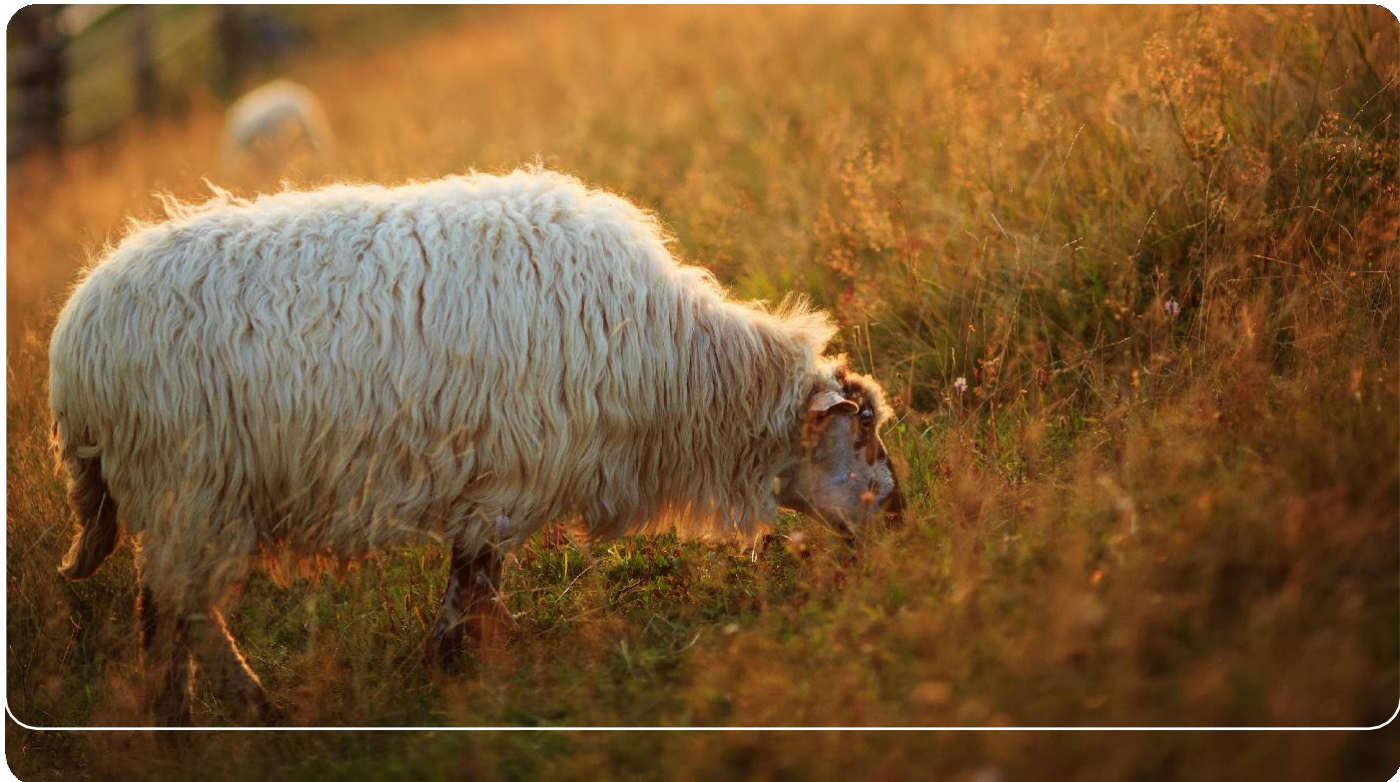
**Description:**

Set stocking or continuous grazing systems are commonly operated on many sheep farms; sheep graze the same grassland area throughout the grazing season

Rotational grazing systems involve dividing the grassland area into a number of paddocks, which are then grazed, fertilised and rested in turn. Higher levels of herbage utilisation can be achieved

**Rotational grazing systems facilitate:**

- more control on grazing management
- surplus grass to be harvested in times of excess production
- the production of high feed value silage
- creep grazing with lambs later in season
- a more targeted fertiliser programme



## Expected benefits

Higher grass production, increased sward quality and high feed value silage produced, all of which increase animal performance and can reduce feed costs.



- If a mains electric supply is not available then battery fencers or solar fencers can be used. Note the battery output and what area/length of fencing it will cover.
- Water troughs should be strategically placed between paddocks, if some paddocks do not have a water supply then temporary options such as water tanks/barrels/IBC can be used.

## Prerequisites and/or limits:

- Need to invest in fencing, gates and water troughs for this system
- Need to know when sheep need to be moved and when grass should be grazed

**Country:** Ireland

**Meat sheep**

**Category of Animal:** All

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## Topic:

- Health
- Nutrition
- Management

## Level of solution:

- Knowledge
- Practical

## Source of information:

- **Setting up**  
<https://www.teagasc.ie/media/website/publications/2018/Sheep-grazing-infrastructure-guide.pdf>
- **Advantages** <https://www.teagasc.ie/news--events/daily/sheep/advantages-of-rotational-grazing-systems-for-sheep.php>
- **Fencing options**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-sJzo4gGQ0U>
- **Rotational grazing**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xc9fdk2q6d4>