

5.2 Rough Moorland Grazing

Definition: Rough moorland grazing is widespread in the uplands and marginal hill land and is dominated by coarse grasses such as purple moor grass, matt grass, tufted hair grass, cotton grasses, wavy hair grass, heath rush, soft rush and sedges. Rough moorland grazing contains less than 25% heather cover and less than 20% ryegrasses, timothy and white clover.

Aim: to maintain and enhance the conservation value of rough moorland grazing through the implementation of low level grazing and appropriate agricultural practices.

Biodiversity objectives: rough moorland grazing contributes to the Biodiversity Action Plan targets for Irish hare and Curlew. The proposed Biodiversity Actions plans for Purple moor grass and rush pastures, Upland calcareous grassland and some NI Priority Species such as the Golden plover, Hen harrier and Marsh saxifrage will also benefit.

Management requirements

- Stocking rate restriction of 0.75LU per hectare all year.
- No cultivation, fertilisation, liming, reclamation, drainage, dumping, mineral extraction or application of slurry, farmyard manure, herbicides, insecticides, sheep dip, fungicides, sewage sludge, basic slag, poultry litter or any other material is permitted.
- Existing drainage systems can be maintained but not widened, deepened or extended.
- Supplementary feeding is permitted on rough moorland grazing. All feeding sites must be regularly moved to prevent trampling and overgrazing damage. Care must be taken to avoid damage by vehicles.
- Supplementary feeders or troughs should be placed on lanes or other hard areas within rough moorland grazing and at least 10m away from watercourses.
- Peat cutting is limited to 0.1ha for domestic use. Mechanised peat cutting is not permitted.
- New fencing is not permitted without the permission of DARD.
- Trees must not be planted on rough moorland grazing.
- The spread of scrub/trees must be controlled.
- No poaching.

Further advice

The grazing regime and stocking density for rough moorland and heather moorland mosaics, if present, will be given on the farm management map. Where rough moorland grazing constitutes 50% or less of a grazing unit within a block of heather moorland, the stocking density for heather moorland applies to be whole unit. Where rough moorland constitutes more than 50% of a grazing unit, the stocking density for the whole unit will be an average of the heather moorland and rough grazing stocking densities at a ratio of 1:1 irrespective of the area of rough moorland grazing.

Areas of common grazing will be eligible provided **ALL** graziers/shareholders agree to follow the relevant management requirements. Existing drains may require infilling where DARD deems this necessary.

The annual payment includes an element for routine positive management such as scrub control (see Appendix IV). Noxious weeds such as thistles and ragwort may be controlled with herbicides, applied using a weed wiper or spot sprayer.

Management plans are provided for participants in the **Environmentally Sensitive Areas and Countryside Management Schemes**

