

GrasscheckGB – FAQs

- Q1 Is weekly grass growth measurement essential for the whole year?*
- A1 Grass growth measurements are only required for the duration of the growing season, typically mid-March to mid-October. If animals are housed for a proportion of the grazing season e.g. due to wet weather, we would ask that you continue to measure the platform during this time.
- Q2 Does grass have to be measured weekly or is fortnightly sufficient?*
- A2 To make sure the most accurate data is communicated to farmers and to allow the most appropriate management decisions to be taken, weekly measurement is important. This is particularly true in months such as May and June where grass growth rates can change by over 40kg DM/ha/day each week, quickly altering decisions on if and how much grass to remove from the grazing platform.
- Q3 Do I need to measure the whole grazing platform?*
- A3 Where farm sizes are large it would be impractical to measure the whole grazing platform each week. It is possible to only measure one block of the farm each week but this must be the same block followed right throughout the year and it must contain a number of paddocks with different stages of growth each week (e.g. one week regrowth, 2 week regrowth, at point of grazing, just grazed). As guidance a minimum of 50 acres and 10 paddocks should be measured each week.
- Q4 Do I need to measure silage fields?*
- A4 No silage fields are not required
- Q5 What is the duration of the commitment? 3 years or 5 years?*
- A5 The project will run for a three year period starting in 2019. Participants will be expected to measure for the 2019, 2020 and 2021 grazing season.
- Q6 Will there be training on the measurement techniques I need to use?*
- A6 At the start of the project there will be a training day for all farmers involved in using the electronic platimeters, grass software and weigh cells. Members of the project team will be available online and via phone each week to help with any problems uploading data and to deal with any measurement queries.
- Q7 What do I do if I am away from the farm and can't measure?*
- A7 Although we advise to measure the farm on the same day each week, measurements can be taken on days either side of holiday periods to minimise any potential loss of data. If you are away for a few weeks at a time, measurements should be taken by another member of the team during this time.
- Q8 What do I do if I no longer want to be part of the project?*
- A8 Hopefully the project will provide your farm will a lot of valuable data and information, and you will enjoy being part of GrassCheckGB. If however you cannot partake in the project for its full

duration, you will be asked to return all equipment to CIEL and any quality analysis and subscriptions to software will cease.

Q9 Will forage analysis include trace elements at any time during the year?

A9 Fortnightly analysis of grass crude protein, metabolisable energy, dry matter, water soluble carbohydrate and fibre will take place. There may also be the option to do trace mineral analysis at one or two points throughout the season.

Q10 Do I need to undertake soil analysis as part of the project?

A10 We would ask that you provide all recent soil test results for each paddock you are measuring.

Q11 Can I use other measurement devices instead of a platometer?

A11 Platimeters will be supplied as part of the project and where possible we would like participants to use these. If there are other new technologies out there which you would prefer to use we would need information on how these calibrate against a platimeter before determining whether they can be used.

Q12 What's the make & model of the platometer supplied?

A12 The platimeter supplied is a Jenquip EC10 platimeter which connects to computer via USB.

Q13 Can I record different mobs and grazing areas in the grass software?

A13 Yes up to six different groups of animals can be supported in the grass management software and these can be assigned to different grazing areas within the farm.

Q14 How are periods of set stocking being dealt with?

A14 For the study we would ask that farms use rotational grazing practices as this allows the best measurement of grass growth rates. If small periods of set stocking are being used on farms for short periods (e.g. after lambing) these may be able to be accommodated but it is preferred that rotational grazing is used for most of the year.

Q15 Will everyone be on the same platometer equations, and will they change through the year?

A15 Yes, all platimeters will be calibrated to the same equation. An equation has been selected that should best reflect the whole grazing season so they will not need to be altered throughout the season.

Q16 Do I have to record all soil fertility inputs?

A16 Yes, we would ask that all soil tests, fertiliser and slurry applications relating to the area measured are recorded. Doing this allows assessment of nutrient efficiency.

Q17 Do I need to record feed inputs?

A17 Yes, we would ask that all feed inputs during the grazing season are recorded for each mob. This helps calculate actual performance from pasture.

Q18 How will forage crops in the system be handled (especially if grazed during the summer)?

A18 A record of all supplementary feeding will be kept, and a yield estimate calculated of any forage crops used.

Q19 How often will I need to weigh animals?

A19 Measurements of animal live weight should be taken once every month. For sheep farms it is sufficient for the first measurement to be taken at 8 weeks post lambing.

Q20 What weighing equipment is supplied?

A20 The weigh kits are the TruTest MP600 load bars with a 2.2m weigh platform and Ezi-Weigh 7i system.

<https://livestock.tru-test.com/en/load-bars-cells/mp600>

<https://livestock.tru-test.com/en/indicators/eziweigh7i>