



The
**Co-operative
Difference**



Dairy for life

Winter Grazing Management Factsheet

Why Winter Grazing?

We all want clean, healthy waterways for our children to swim in and safe water to drink. It is what our customers and communities expect too.

Grazing of stock during the winter months is a higher risk practice that needs to be well managed to minimise the effect on water quality and impact on animals' health and wellbeing. The risk of contaminants entering water is increased where crops and supplementary feed are utilised to support higher stocking rates during the winter months. This risk is increased where wintering occurs on sloping land.

Ensuring that you have a plan in place to manage and mitigate the impact of grazing events during these months will benefit freshwater quality and animal wellbeing outcomes, and reflect those expectations of our customers, consumers and communities.

How do I meet the achievement?

To meet this achievement you will need to assess the winter grazing risk associated with your farm and demonstrate how this risk is managed before 1 May each season for the upcoming winter.

1. Determine the level of risk associated with your winter grazing practices for the upcoming winter. This is determined by:

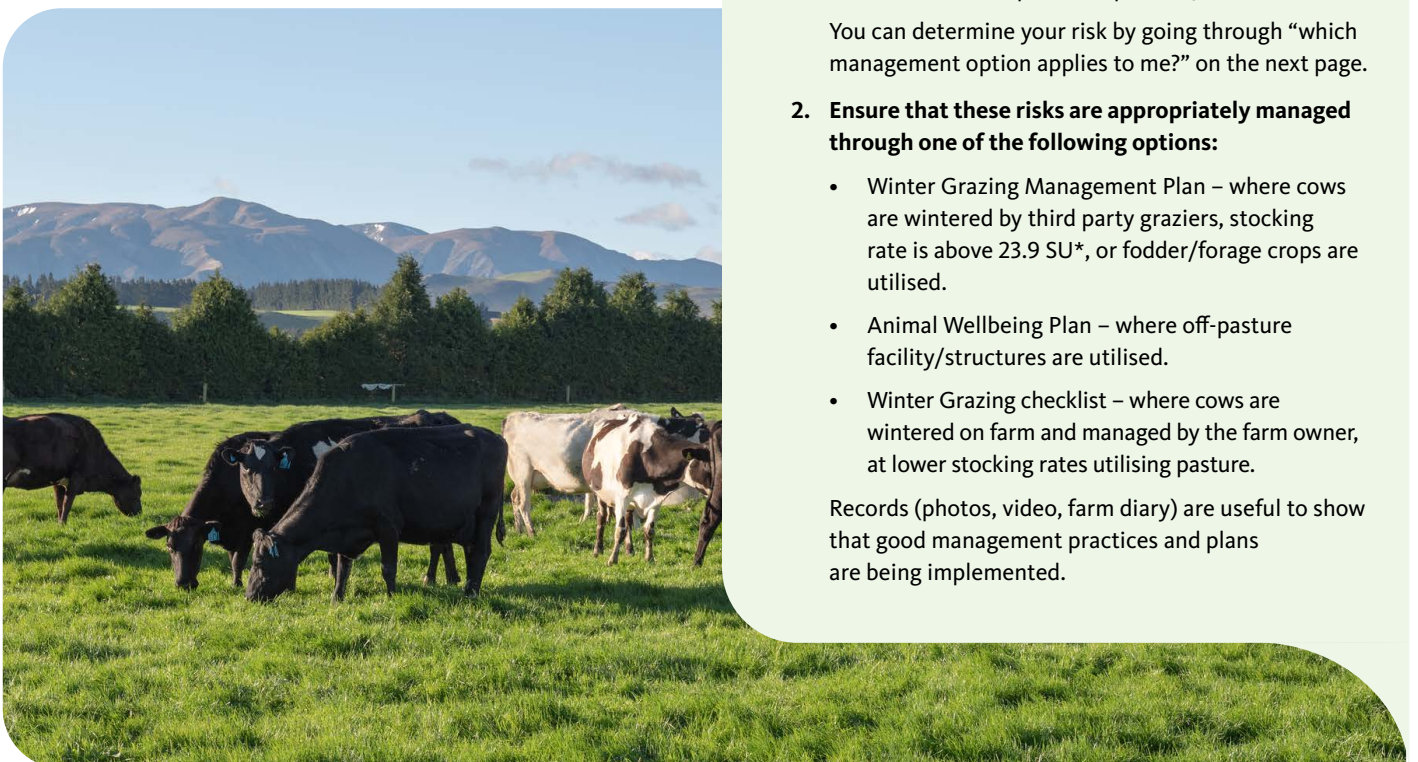
- Who is responsible for the day-to-day management of winter grazing.
- The peak stocking rate (SU) for your farm - inclusive of replacements.
- Use of fodder/forage crops during winter months.
- Use of off-paddock structures (such as wintering barn, stand off pad, feed pad etc.).

You can determine your risk by going through "which management option applies to me?" on the next page.

2. Ensure that these risks are appropriately managed through one of the following options:

- Winter Grazing Management Plan – where cows are wintered by third party graziers, stocking rate is above 23.9 SU*, or fodder/forage crops are utilised.
- Animal Wellbeing Plan – where off-pasture facility/structures are utilised.
- Winter Grazing checklist – where cows are wintered on farm and managed by the farm owner, at lower stocking rates utilising pasture.

Records (photos, video, farm diary) are useful to show that good management practices and plans are being implemented.

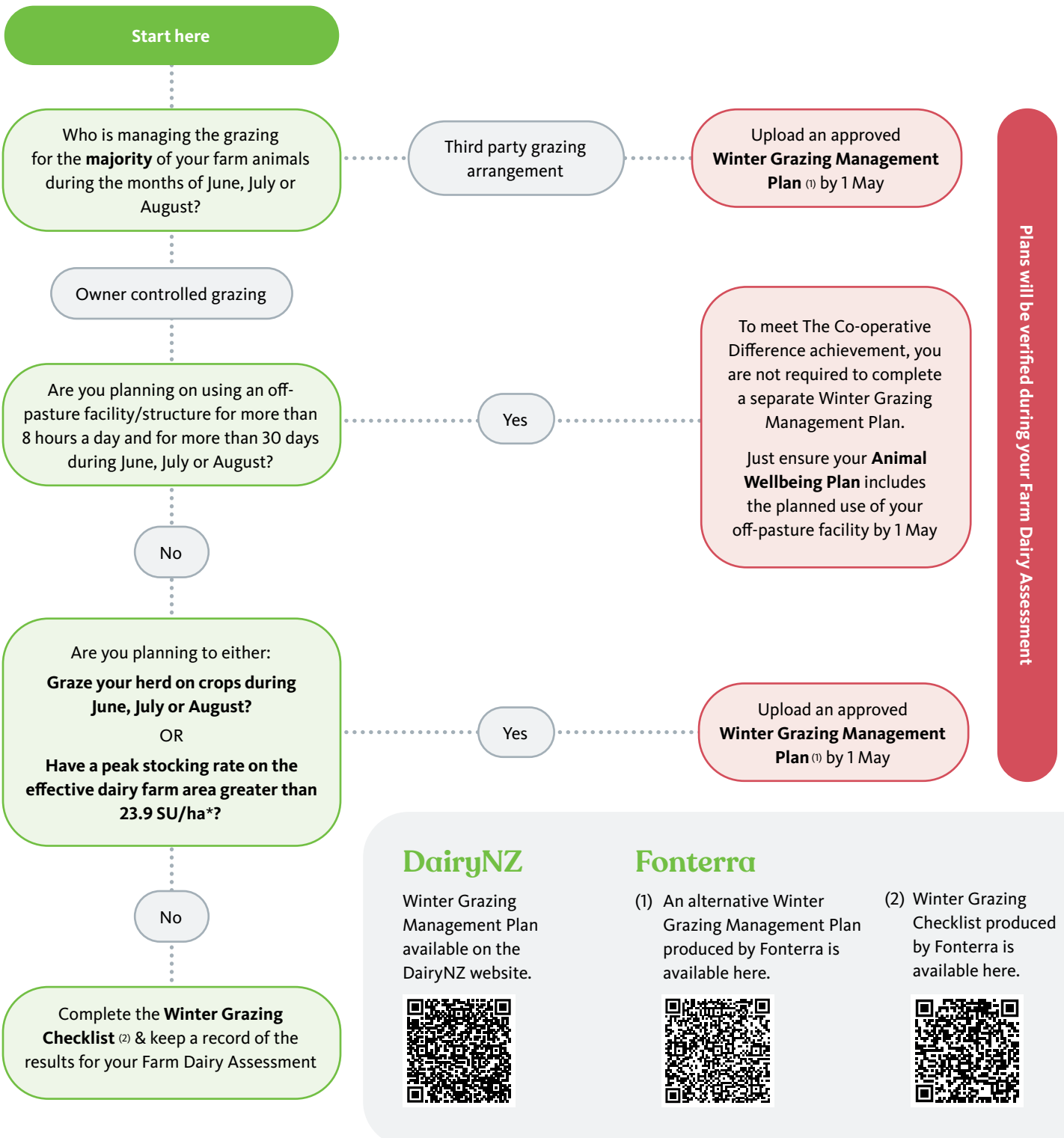




Which management option applies to me?

Use the decision tree below to answer questions about the grazing practices that are planned for the **majority** of your animals for the upcoming winter period (1 June – 30 August 2025).

NOTE: Only one option is required per farm (E.g. if your animals are grazed 70% off platform, then complete the decision tree for the largest portion of animals, i.e.: Third party grazing arrangement).



* Stock Units (su) are a means of calculating stock numbers between species, breeds, and age groups based on relative feed demand. For example 23.9su is equivalent to approximately 3 cows/ha (Friesian/Jersey cross) or 1,500kg liveweight per hectare. This number can be found on your Farm Insights Report on page 5.



Minimum Standards for a Winter Grazing Management Plan

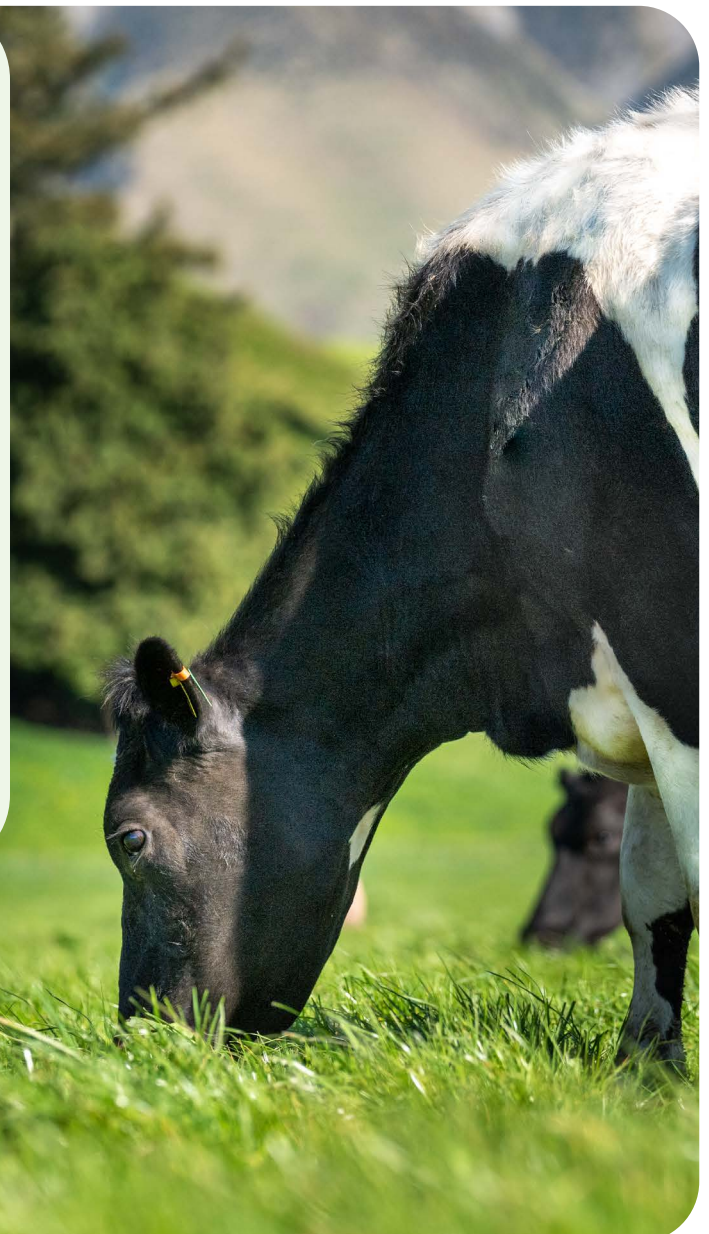
Complete **one** of the Winter Grazing Management Plan templates and demonstrate how the following minimum standards will be achieved:

Critical Source Areas	Cultivation	Slopes
(1) Critical source areas will be left unsprayed, uncultivated and will be stock excluded.	(2) No cultivation, or grazing of crops or pasture, within 5m from the edge of a bank of any waterway on flat land (less than 5 degrees).	(4) No winter grazing of crops on slopes greater than 10 degrees.
	(3) No cultivation or grazing of crops or pasture within 10m from the edge of a bank of any waterway on sloping land (greater than 5 degrees).	(5) No break feeding/mob stocking of cattle on slopes greater than 20 degrees.

NOTE: The minimum standards described here in some cases are different to the National Intensive Winter Grazing rules. To find the IWG rules [click here](#).

Definitions:

- **Critical source area** - Small, low-lying parts of farms such as gullies and swales where runoff accumulates in high concentration, and significant contaminant loads occur that may be delivered to water.
- **Mob stocking** - High density grazing of stock where they are restricted to a small area for a short period of time.
- **Peak stocking rate** - The peak stocking rate for your dairy farm effective area includes all dairy cows and replacements. This is calculated using information provided through your Farm Dairy Records (utilising SU's). The national median stocking rate is **23.9 SU/ha***.
- **Waterway** - Any river, stream, drain or canal and any lake or wetland to its fullest wetted extent, that flows or contains water at least once annually. This definition does not include ephemeral watercourses that only flow during or immediately following extreme weather events.





Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why are the winter grazing months for The Co-operative Difference restricted to June, July, and August and not May, June, and July like the National Intensive Winter Grazing (IWG) rules?

NIWA rainfall data across a range of locations found that the months of June, July and August consistently received the highest volume of rainfall based upon the mean monthly wet days.

Q. Why have break feeding and mob stocking?

Both break feeding and mob stocking practices encompass high stocking rates (whether on crops or pasture) where the risk of contaminant loss to water is increased.

Q. Does the slope degree requirement refer to an average?

This applies to individual slopes that are greater than the specified limit (5, 10, or 20 degrees), rather than a paddock average. In order to meet the achievement, cropping and grazing will need to be on slopes that are less than those specified in the minimum standards.

NOTE: Slope is defined as the elevation difference across any 20-metre distance for any area being used for intensive winter grazing.

Q. How can I tell what a 10 degree or 20 degrees slope looks like?

Use the DairyNZ resource to help determine the slope risk of your paddocks. Download the Pocket Guide to determining soil risk and go to *Step 3. Review of topography of the farm.*

Available on the DairyNZ website - [click here](#).

Q. Why has a 5m buffer distance from waterways been used for flat land?

This is the minimum standard set by national regulations.

Q. Do all fields in the Winter Grazing Management Plan need to be filled in to meet the winter grazing management achievement?

When completing an approved Winter Grazing Management Plan all fields must be completed and the plan must cover and demonstrate how they will meet the minimum standard (Factsheet page 2 above) to meet The Co-operative Difference achievement. This can include entering N/A where applicable.

Q. Are there any other requirements to consider when planning my winter grazing?

Yes, the national intensive winter grazing regulations require minimum standards for things like off pasture facilities /structures, slopes and setbacks from waterways.

Q. When will my Winter Grazing Management Plan be verified?

Your Winter Grazing Management Plan covering the winter period (1 June – 30 August 2025) will be verified by either one of two pathways:

1. A selected number of farms will have an on-farm verification during the winter period (1 June – 30 August 2025).
2. All other farms will have their plans retrospectively assessed at their Farm Dairy Assessment (1 June 2024 - 31 May 2026).

Q. When can I work with my vet to include wintering?

As per the diagram on page 2 if you are planning to use an off paddock facility this can be included in your Animal Wellbeing Plan.



Support

If you require additional information regarding The Co-operative Difference, call the Farm Source Service Centre on: **0800 65 65 68**