

## 6. Acknowledgements

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# Appendix 1: The grazing animals project rationale

## The grazing animals project (GAP)

### Conserving biodiversity through sustainable grazing

**RATIONALE:** Virtually all grassland and heathland habitats in the UK have been created by, and are dependant upon, grazing by domesticated stock. These habitats include 18 of the 39 key habitats in the UK biodiversity initiative for which costed Habitat Action Plans have been or are being produced, and include a large number of Natura 2000 and BAP sites. Without grazing these habitats would undergo vegetational succession to woodland and their biodiversity would be lost. Stock grazing is therefore of fundamental importance to biodiversity especially as there is only limited potential for grazing by wild herbivores for nature conservation in the U.K.

Identifying, initiating and above all sustaining effective grazing regimes is one of the greatest challenges for nature conservation over much of the U.K., and in particular in the south and east, where pastoral systems no longer exist. Modern farming is now less able to assist nature conservation by providing suitable animals for conservation grazing. Consequently, the U.K. nature conservation organisations have been developing grazing schemes that use their own stock, or by borrowing animals mostly from outside mainstream agriculture. There is an increasing reliance on environmental and agri-environment grant aid to implement and maintain what are currently often ephemeral schemes.

Although there are many examples of successful nature conservation grazing regimes, there are still a large number of important wildlife sites where grazing is not being implemented at all, and on many other sites grazing is being carried out on an *ad hoc*, piecemeal basis in a manner which is not economically sustainable in the long term (\*1). Furthermore the degree of isolation and the paucity of communication within the multi-organisational UK nature conservation movement means that individuals do not learn sufficiently from the experience of others. Consequently there is a high frequency of replication of mistakes and repetition of 'discovery'. This is particularly demonstrated by the choice of grazing animal and breed which is often inappropriate for the attainment of conservation objectives. Knowledge of what species, breed and age of animal to use is currently inadequate (\*2). Above all, there is an acute shortage of integrated grazing schemes within regions or 'natural areas'. If it is accepted that grazing is generally the most economical land management technique for maintaining the wildlife interest of these semi-natural habitats in the longer term then this provides a strong economic and environmental argument to resolve the constraints (\*3).

\*1. A recent assessment of grazing on 110 SSSIs in Worcestershire showed that of the 79 sites that should be grazed 25 sites were either not being grazed at all or the site was under-grazed. This is nearly 32%. It is likely that this situation is reflected in many other parts of the UK.

\*2. A survey of 33 managers (GAP '98) wanting to start up grazing schemes on 42 sites revealed that 5 (15%) were unsure as to the best type of stock to use; 19 (58%) were unsure as to the best breed of stock to use; 24 (73%) were unclear as to the preferred age or sex of the preferred grazing animal; and 9 (27%) were uncertain as to the months of the year when grazing should take place on their site. 32% from another survey commented that they would (or might 16%) prefer to use a different grazing animal to that currently used.

\*3. A recent survey of grazing managers (GAP '98) classified some 47 constraints which they were trying to overcome. Many managers were trying to cope with three or more major constraints.

The Grazing Animals Project seeks to do just that by bringing together, coordinating and integrating the efforts of interested parties in nature conservation, agriculture, the food industry, and other sectors involved with maintenance of landscapes and rural economies in order to secure the sustainable grazing of nature conservation sites into the future.

**EVALUATION:** The benefits of the Project to our heritage will include the more effective delivery of biodiversity targets for habitats and species. It will also involve retaining rare and minority native livestock breeds, and help with the maintenance and enhancement of landscapes. These various products can be delivered through a regional / 'natural areas' approach involving the creation of genuine working rural partnerships. The Project will create rural employment through the setting up of businesses and industries and the development of markets for a wide range of products produced on land managed for biodiversity.

## **OBJECTIVES**

**Overall:** To facilitate the implementation of the grazing of Natura 2000, BAP and other wildlife sites in a sustainable manner to meet stated wildlife conservation, landscape and rural objectives. (Target date: by 2003). More specifically,

**Objective 1.** To collect, collate and disseminate relevant information to enable the assessment of the scale and extent of current grazing practices and the problems managers have.

*Methods:* by questionnaire to grazing managers (Feb. '98), collation of available data (Dec. '98), and commissioning of further research.

*Outputs:*

- 1.1 Production of an inventory of grazed sites, to include brief details of type of site, animals grazed, period of grazing, contact name and address, etc. (Sep. '99).
- 1.2 Production of an inventory of people with experience of and expertise in assessing grazing needs, choosing stock, handling stock, and of related written advice, notes, published or unpublished papers etc. (Sep '99).
- 1.3 Production of a report giving comparative breed profiles for grazing animals suitable for the grazing of semi natural habitats giving detailed information about: each breed; its attributes and abilities; grazing preferences / selectivity; hardiness and care requirements; performance; together with listing of sites where they are being used and how products are being marketed; references to any relevant published or unpublished work. (Sept. '99).

- 1.4 Production of a prioritised list of information or research required to fill major gaps in current knowledge. Seek funding and identify personnel or contractors to carry out the work. (Dec. '99).

**Objective 2. To give assistance and best practice advice to individuals or organisations seeking to improve or start a grazing scheme.**

*Methods:* through the establishment of a 'Grazing Forum' network. (Apr. '98) and by the appointment of a Project Contractor to gather information on barriers, identify solutions and disseminate information.

*Outputs:*

- 2.1 Arrange visits and workshops for the viewing of nature conservation grazing as it happens on site and to enable discussion of the scheme's successes, failures or problems; provide opportunities for the discussion of practical and policy issues concerning grazing. (Apr. '98 and ongoing)
- 2.2 Production and distribution of a newsletter to enable informal networking, to inform people of meetings, developments, and outputs from the GAP Project and to stimulate other work. (Spring '98 and thereafter quarterly).
- 2.3 Production and dissemination of information notes, policy papers and documentation concerning issues being dealt with by the Project; e.g. review of the many animal welfare codes (Dec. '98); comparisons between breed/types, etc.
- 2.4 Initiate a "Grazelots" exchange and mart facility within the GAP Newsletter for the advertisement of grazing and animal commodities 'for sale' or 'wanted' (summer '98 and ongoing); secure a longer term self funding facility for its expansion. (Eco-Ads, Sep. '99).
- 2.5 Encourage and assist where possible other people and organisations to undertake work or research related to the aims of the Project. (As appropriate).
- 2.6 Encourage, facilitate, or arrange training courses and lecturers on aspects of grazing for nature conservation; e.g. stock husbandry and handling, habitat management by grazing.
- 2.7 Consider staging a major GAP/FACT Conference and regional seminars to assist with delivery of the Project objectives. (FACT Conference, Cambridge, 20 - 22 September '99).
- 2.8 Consider the feasibility of setting up a GAP telephone advice 'hot-line' service.

**Objective 3. To establish and rank the constraints currently acting against the extension or setting up of nature conservation grazing schemes; and then to work to resolve, remove, or limit their effects.**

*Methods:* by formation of a 'Working Group' ( Feb. '98) and by holding of workshops (Mar. '98 and ongoing); by questionnaire(s) to grazing managers (Feb. '98), then by working with partners, policy staff and industry representatives.

*Outputs:*

- 3.1 Produce a report that provides examples of the constraints (by rank) preventing the extension of existing grazing schemes or the setting up of new grazing schemes. (Mar. '99).
- 3.2 Produce a report to provide examples of the current deficit in, and demand for, the supply of grazing animals. (Sep. '99).
- 3.3 Targeted action to remove or limit the effect of the identified constraints.

**Objective 4. Encourage, facilitate and assist with the setting up or development of sustainable 'regional / natural area grazing schemes' for the delivery of biodiversity management objectives and targets.**

*Methods:* by discussion ('98/'99) with interested parties within suitable region(s) / 'natural area(s)', followed by piloting ('99). Overall to establish within a defined geographical area an integrated and partnership approach to the provision and supply of the infrastructure, equipment, livestock, advice and support necessary to secure the required grazing on valuable wildlife sites. This will involve not only working within the conservation industry to bring together initiatives from all the conservation organisations but also to actively bring in and develop links within the livestock, agricultural and rural industries, wherever these may benefit attainment of the objective. Encourage a full system approach from 'grass blade to meat joint'. Then to use the experience gained by the 'pilot' scheme(s) to develop 'regional / natural area grazing schemes' widely within the UK. (2000 to 2003).

*Outputs:*

- 4.1 Encourage pilot schemes that:
  - improve the co-ordination and linking of current grazing schemes from whatever source or organisation to extract and maximise the benefits.
  - further develop the availability of grazing resources from a wide range of suppliers to meet current and future needs.

- target effort to remove or nullify those constraints which are currently acting against successful grazing.
- improve the 'quality' of grazing by securing the 'best' grazing animals (breed, age, sex) for the right season(s) to produce the desired result on each site.
- develop the marketing opportunities for the products of grazing schemes.
- ensure that the above developments are implemented in such a way that the grazing systems and grazing enterprises are sustainable and continue to achieve results into the next century.

4.2 Production of a report that draws out the conclusions learnt from any pilot schemes and that recommend a 'best practice' approach to the meeting of grazing deficits. (2000/01).

4.3 The setting up and establishment of a network of 'regional / natural area grazing schemes' throughout the country. (2001 to 2003).

## **STRUCTURE OF THE PROJECT**

GAP was formed by the coming together of two founder initiatives, the Forum for the Application of Conservation Techniques 'FACT 1' Project, and the Liverpool John Moores University Farming and Rural Conservation Agency Workshop on 'The Use of Rare Breeds in Conservation Management', June 1997. It now has the following structure:

- A Steering Group: comprised of representatives from relevant organisations and industries and meeting approximately twice yearly.

This currently includes: Chisel Farm Organics, Corporation of London, English Nature (coordinator), European Forum on Nature Conservation and Pastoralism, Liverpool John Moores University, National Farmers Union, Rare Breed Survival Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Soil Association, The National Trust. The Farming and Rural Conservation Agency attend as 'information providers'. (Membership is constantly under review).

- A Grazing Forum: acting as the main 'networking' arm of the Project responsible for production of the Newsletter, arranging field meetings and collection of data. Currently led by Dr. Richard Small and Dr. Helen Read.
- A Working Group: a small group of practitioners and industry representatives working to identify the constraints currently preventing best grazing and the targeting of effort

to remove those constraints. Responsible also for the development and piloting of grazing strategies within natural areas. Currently led by John Bacon.

## **FUNDING**

All the above Organisations have contributed staff time and travel costs without charge to the Project. The R.B.S.T. has provided a meeting room for the Steering Group free of charge. The R.S.P.B. has contributed funds to assist with the analysis of the Questionnaire. Other funds required for the formation phase of the Project, including the setting up of the Steering Group, Grazing Forum and Working Group have been from English Nature's ENPACT Project.

English Nature has recently provided funds for provision of a three year Project Contractor(s) to be responsible to the Steering Group for the running of the Grazing Animals Project, co-ordinate the delivery of the outputs set out in this Project document and to provide guidance to others in the setting up of grazing schemes.

Hampshire County Council with English Nature's support have obtained funding for the first of the pilot 'regional/natural area grazing schemes'. Other organisations are currently developing and seeking funds for additional pilots.

EN, CA, FA, EA, CCW and RSPB have recently agreed funding for two years to expand the "Grazelots" initiative into a full bi-monthly "Eco-Ads" Magazine proposal, as a sister magazine to the F.A.'s "Woodlots" Magazine. Production of the first Eco-Ads is planned for autumn '99.

*End. 20. 5. 99. (Document subject to revision).*

## Appendix 2: Pro-forma for questionnaire a

### Your Details

1. Name and address (optional but by giving it we can try to make sure that you are only asked once to fill in the form).

Name: ..... (Please print)

Address: ..... (Please print)

..... Post codes. ....

Tel: ..... Fax: .....

Organisation (if applicable): .....

2. Are you happy for us to contact you for more information? Yes/No

3. Would you be happy for your name to be given to others in similar situations? Yes/No

### The land

4. Where are you grazing your animals? Please give site location and grid reference if possible. If you are grazing several sites please answer for just one and pick that which has a nature conservation interest (even if it is not designated so) or your largest or most diverse area. Please contact Helen Read for more copies of the form (or photocopy it) if you would like to fill it in for your other sites.

Site Name	Size of grazed site(s) (in hectares)	Status or designation*	Grant Scheme**	Who owns it?	County	Nearest Town	Grid Ref.

\* E.g. NNR, SSSI, LNR, SINC, CWT, PSAC.

\*\* E.g. ESA, Countryside Stewardship, English Nature Management Grant.

5. Is the site subdivided? Yes / No      Number of subdivisions? .....      Are they permanent / temporary

**The vegetation of the site**

6. Please describe the land you are grazing as accurately as you can by ringing the most appropriate option on each line:

Upland / Lowland

Coastal / Inland

Wet/Dry / Varied

Salt marsh / Dunes / Grassland / Fen / Heathland / Moorland / Pasture woodland

Sand / loam / clay / gravel / alluvial soil / other .....

Calcareous / Acidic / Neutral

Flat / Gently sloping / Steeply sloping

7. Do you know the National Vegetation Classification of the grazed area?

NVC code	NVC Description	% of site

8. If your land has not been classified using NVC please provide a brief description of the main vegetation types present (including any dominant species). Please try to answer this question if you have not answered 7 above.

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**Your grazing animals**

9. What type of animals are you currently using?

Sheep/Goats/Cattle/Ponies/Pigs/Others – please specify .....

10. What breed(s) are they and how many do you graze? (we are interested in cross breeds and modern breeds as well as native ones)

Type (sheep, cattle etc.)	Breed	Numbers (Please indicate if these vary)	Age	Sex

11. Who owns the animals you graze?

Stock owned by			Land grazed under		
Yourself/Your organisation	On loan	Belong to tenant	Tenanted agreement	Grazing licence agreement	Other agreement (please specify)

12. Why did you choose the type/breed of animals you did? Please tick the relevant boxes for each breed.

<b>Type/breed:</b>						
<b>Market demand</b>						
<b>Availability at purchase date</b>						
<b>Stock belonging to local farmer</b>						
<b>Grazing behaviour</b>						
<b>Growth rate on given pasture</b>						
<b>Ability to finish</b>						
<b>Temperament</b>						
<b>Adapted to climate (e.g. hardiness)</b>						
<b>Fertility</b>						
<b>Other</b>						

13. Where do your animals originate from? E.g. moor bred, rye/clover ley farm land.

Breed	Origin	No. of generations (if recently changed)	Do they winter outside?

14. How tame are your animals?

Breed	Totally wild	Catchable to trailer/lorry/pen	Catchable by hand/bucket	Halter trained	Trained to a working dog

15. What determines the number of animals you graze?

	Yes	No	Method by which issue determined
Limit on numbers imposed by owner			
Specific conservation objective			
Price of stock			
Productivity of pasture			
Market outlet for stock, e.g. store or finished			
Trial and error			
Number of suitable animals available			
Other			

**Grazing objectives**

16. What is your main objective for grazing this area?

- 'Store' animals
- Fattening / finishing
- Flushing
- Tupping / bulling
- Breeding
- As a conservation tool only
- For fun!
- Overwintering / holding site
- Other (please specify) .....

17. If nature conservation management is a main objective for grazing, please tick the main aim(s) here according to how effective the animals are. Enter in each ticked box the type/breed/age/sex of the animal if the effect is specific to that type of animal.

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Very poor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Well</b>	<b>Very well</b>
<b>Elimination of trees/shrubs (name main target species)</b>					
<b>Control trees/shrubs invasion by taking seedlings etc. (name main target species)</b>					
<b>Maintain vegetation structure (maintenance graz)</b>					
<b>Improve vegetation structure (Restoration grazing)</b>					
<b>Develop vegetation mosaic</b>					
<b>Increase amount of bare ground</b>					
<b>Control of invasive grass</b>					
<b>Control of bracken</b>					
<b>Reduce fire risk</b>					
<b>Single species management (which species)</b>					
<b>Other reason (please specify)</b>					

**Performance of animals**

18. Are there any particular plant/s your animals like or will not eat? Please list their various preferences here. If you have noticed any significant diet preferences between animals of different sex (including castrates), or animals of different age within the same breed please note them here.

Type/Breed	Age	Sex			Likes	Dislikes
		M	F	C		

19. Do your animals graze this area all year round? Please put a tick in each box to indicate when that particular breed is grazed. Please put a square around the tick if the animals have access to lay back land in any months. Please circle the tick if animals are removed in severe weather. Please put a cross in the box if the animals are not grazed on this area but are transferred to lay back land.

Stock / Breed	Month											
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

20. Have you had any health problems with the animals when they have been out grazing e.g. flies, pneumonia, foot rot, loss of condition due to hard weather or poor grazing? Please list any problems here and give an indication of the proportion of your stock to which this applies.

Type/Breed	Problem	Proportion of stock	How frequent

21. Do you give supplementary feeding to the animals at any time? If so what do you give and when?

Breed	Age	Sex	Supplements	Months fed

22. How regularly are your animals checked? .....

23. What veterinary treatments are regularly carried out?

Breed	Type of treatment	How frequently carried out

24. Do you sell the progeny of your animals? **Yes/No**
25. Do you use a premium scheme for marketing? .....
26. What is the approximate cost or profit of your grazing scheme? .....
27. If you are grazing other sites which you think we might be interested in please provide a summary of them here.

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Brief Description (include NVC if possible)</b>	<b>What animals are grazed?</b>	<b>How many are grazed?</b>	<b>What is the reason for grazing? (refer to question 12)</b>

**Problems**

28. Please list the biggest problems you have had to deal with in setting up the grazing scheme; in priority order (the biggest first); and say how it was solved, if it was. (See also question 29)

a) Problem: .....

Solution: .....  
.....

b) Problem: .....

Solution: .....  
.....

c) Problem: .....

Solution: .....

If you have more problems please continue on a separate sheet.

29. Please list the biggest problems you have to face on an annual basis **now** and indicate how you hope to solve them, or what help you need to solve them, and from whom?

a) Problem: .....

Solution: .....  
.....

b) Problem: .....

Solution: .....  
.....

c) Problem: .....

Solution: .....  
.....

If you have more problems please continue on a separate sheet.

30. Anything else you wish to say, not covered by earlier sections that may be helpful to other people thinking of setting up a grazing scheme

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31. Would you prefer to be using a different breed, age or sex of animal? If so, please state what. If you do not know which you would prefer please indicate.

A)

Type of animal	Breed	Age	Sex	How many?	Which months of year?	Which animals would they replace?

B) Don't know