

3.10 Problems and Solutions of Grazing on Conservation Sites

Respondents were asked to list the problems they had encountered in setting up their grazing scheme and recurrent problems they experienced on an annual basis; they were also asked to indicate the solutions to the problems of establishment or what they needed to overcome recurrent problems. Respondents were encouraged to list, in order of priority, as many problems and solutions as they were able but few used more than the three spaces provided.

3.10.1 Problems Encountered in Establishing Grazing Schemes

There were no recorded problems for 20 sites; two of these stated “No problems” but the remainder were nil responses. Thus 102 schemes had encountered at least one problem in establishment; Box 25 records the problems encountered by respondents in setting up their grazing scheme and how the problems were overcome. In some instances no solution was suggested and the problem may be considered to be continuing. Most comments are reported *verbatim* but some have been subject to minor editing. There is no significance to the numbers of the sites in Box 25 other than to distinguish one from another.

As this question was ‘free-form’ the descriptions and details provided by respondents varied considerably, but several recurrent themes emerge (see summary, Box 25). The availability of suitable stock, at the right time(s), was one such theme and, where the managing organisation did not wish to obtain their own stock, was linked to the availability of a suitable grazier. Even when graziers were found their lack of comprehension of the aims of grazing conservation sites or their own (incompatible) aims frequently led to difficulties; in some cases this was clearly identified as the conflict of interest between the financial returns to the grazier and the conservation objectives of the site. Several respondents reported that BSE and the Over Thirty Months Scheme had aggravated the difficulties of obtaining suitable cattle. Obtaining suitable stock was most frequently achieved ‘through the grapevine’ or by ‘networking’. The former identified farmers or graziers with suitable stock and included use of the Smallholders’ Association via an agricultural college lecturer. Networking with other conservation agency staff was more frequently used to locate stock for purchase.

Graziers’ incomprehension of, or unwillingness to accept, the limitations imposed by conservation objectives were sometimes overcome by persistent explanation, cajoling or monitoring, but in others alternative graziers had to be sought even if that meant bringing stock from further afield. In some instances graziers were ‘triallyed’ before the most suitable was identified.

If suitable stock and/or a grazier were found containing the animals was a common problem. Many respondents mentioned the need for, and cost of, fencing their sites. Examples included an 8km boundary fence and replacement of 6km of fencing on separate sites; given the often difficult terrain of conservation sites compared to much agricultural land the costs of such fences can be very great. Stock handling facilities and other infrastructure, including adequate access arrangements, further add to the costs of establishing a grazing scheme and were mentioned by a few respondents. Where identified, the costs of fencing and other infrastructure had been overcome using conservation grants such as English Nature’s Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (WES) or a Scottish Natural Heritage grant; agri-environment funds such as Countryside Stewardship or Organic Aid had also been used. In a few instances the farmer/grazier had contributed to the costs or had provided labour for fencing.

Box 25: Problems of establishing a grazing scheme and their solutions

Site	Problem	Solution
1	Fencing common land Public access - security Worrying (dog and public - including feeding)	Applied to Ministry of Defence Self-closing gates, alternative paths, policing and public relations Public relations and education
2	Obtaining suitable stock - breed and numbers for time period required To convince landowner to remove existing licensee who was overgrazing with horses & hence loss of income	Contacting everyone known with cattle and trialling various graziers Patience and repetition
3	Control of farming activities to benefit wildlife interest Access and infrastructure - awkward and of poor quality	Conditions as part of grazing agreement: numbers limit, timing, no fertilizers or pesticides Access: allocating grazing to those who used considerate approach to shared access. Infrastructure: money to replace existing infrastructure
4	Finding sufficient stock in some years	Advertising / local contacts
5	Acquiring suitable stock	Hard work, good contacts, luck
6	Costs of permanent sheep fencing Watering in dry summers	WES grant One bowser visit per week, long term solution to dig two new ponds
7	Rent Inadequate productivity of land and too wet to overwinter	Organic aid as part of land into conversion + negotiated lower rent on basis of conservation management as the primary objective Stock removed to indoor housing & fed home-grown hay over winter
8	Loss of grazing in 1980s	Better infrastructure, close liaison with farmers, advertising
9	Catching cattle at the end of the season Handling sick steer - seemingly blind Getting other graziers to graze heathland	Daily 'tid-biting' with nuts + familiarise stock with grazier Lasso from horseback, stun-dart and expensive vet Buying them cattle with grant, convincing grazier that he would gain through extensification + paying £15 per day to graze 20ha
10	Finding enough of the right ages and breeds of cattle to graze wet, rough pastures Finding enough local graziers Finding enough demand for hay crops of moderate/poor quality	Unsolved, although try to control (mechanically and chemically) some of the worst infestations of soft rush to make pasture more palatable Taking stock from distant farms Graze the pasture and top-off the coarse vegetation
11	Getting graziers to see what we want to achieve	Education

Site	Problem	Solution
12	Attracting graziers Attracting sufficient numbers of adequate stock Providing secure grazing - fencing and low ditch water levels	Buy own stock, provide shepherding service for graziers from further-afield until local interest stimulated Had been solved by talking to graziers, showing them daily liveweight gains etc. for different breeds / ages, but 30 month rule now causes real problems Rebuilding gateways / services + replacing 6000m of fence + raising water levels
13	Inheriting tenancies Scrub control Timing Finding graziers who will do what we want, which doesn't give them the best grazing	One broken on death + substituting licence
14	Cost of infrastructure	WES grant
15	Cattle escaping onto unfenced mudflats and from there to other areas of saltmarsh and hence into arable fields	Fencing off bottom end of saltmarsh adjacent to mudflats, and ensuring experienced animals are always present
16	Ability to control and contain livestock Restoration of grassland from former arable fields	Derelict ditches restored mechanically as wet fences + some fencing, mostly at gateways. Three cattle pens built for handling / treatment Reseeding + natural colonisation
17	Poaching during wet periods / around feed Obtaining enough animals when we need them Under-grazing	Restrict timing of grazing + not allowing supplementary feeding Unresolved although grazier will change next season Field topped
18	Lack of infrastructure (no corrals, poor fencing, flooded / wet gateways) Poor husbandry by previous shepherd Retain graziers as land farmed for wildlife (not commercially)	Spend money Replace with new stockman sympathetic to nature conservation objectives Provide good facilities and service at generous cost
19	Fencing sheep in Obtain sheep / cattle	Grazier brought his own electric fence Word of mouth
20	Getting grazier to treat site sensitively and to inform of stock movement Public and dogs Reconciling nature conservation objective with a sheep business	Nagging, invite to meetings to learn more about site, continual monitoring Interpretation on site. Newspaper articles. Voluntary wardens Planning grazing year with grazier
21	Keeping stock on the land and stock from adjoining marsh off Stock becoming stuck in saltmarsh creeks	Fencing across saltmarsh and beyond onto intertidal sand/mud; obtain permission from Highways Dept. to install gate across public road

Site	Problem	Solution
22	Availability of local stock which will graze to our requirements Fencing of grazing area	Word of mouth Farmer erected permanent fencing
23	Providing a package to interest a grazier Store lambs becoming caught in brambles Restoration grazing of rank chalk grassland	Shear lambs in autumn Welsh Mountains on winter keep
24	Cost	Money found
25	Getting stock on and off at right times	Change grazier
26	Lowland sheep breeds not doing the business on our terrain and vegetation Isolated grasslands We want late turn-outs - farmers want spring bite	Not considering graziers with anything except upland breeds Tried low (i.e. no) rents - not successful in the long term We stick to our guns
27	Uncertainty/apprehension about direct responsibility for livestock Lack of knowledge regarding legislation & MAFF responsibilities	Go for it! Local farmers do daily checks and have provided invaluable advice. Other advice coming from GAP contacts and generally available books Still being tackled
28	Bringing boundaries up to stock-proof condition Satisfying grazier about safety due to close proximity of dual carriageway Public resistance	At vast expense - re-fenced or laid hedges Fencing, double gate system and kissing gates installed Consulted with & gained support of Parish Council, made ourselves available to those with complaints / concerns
29	Introduction of fencing Perception of cattle being 'big and dangerous' Opposition to extensive sheep grazing because of lack of dog control	Expensive consultation. On-going day to day public relations Consultation, day to day public relations, experience once introduced. Management in ways and at times to minimise conflicts with public Consultation, day to day public relations, interpretation, management walks, grazing strategy to allow avoidance of sheep areas without major diversion
30	Getting stock and controlling grazing Maintaining fences Dogs on reserves	Reducing rents Grants
31	Securing cliff-top so tenant will graze site Poaching in winter Public anxiety to grazing	Fencing Tough it out Provide information and access to contact
32	Water availability	Constructed small pond, water then piped to holding tank, gravity fed

Site	Problem	Solution
33	Finding potential interested graziers Finding appropriate graziers for grazing aftermath of hay meadow Shearing & getting caught up in brambles, especially Beulahs	Asking around locally Settled for horses instead of cattle which were unavailable Change breed to Wiltshire Horn
34	Finance	Buying / selling in same year
35	Goats escaping	Change goats around every 6 weeks to prevent them becoming bored
36	Finding and controlling graziers Agreement of owner / grazier to graze sheep	Negotiation Negotiation
37	Disputes between habitat and species management	Negotiation
38	Persuading landowners that grazing would not pollute the aquifer Provision of water	Solved in ten years Patience, English Nature funding
39	Public perception Public access - gates and fences damaged	Always interpreting site both with & without stock; always informing public through temporary signs of presence of stock on site. Always interpreting site both with & without stock; always informing public through temporary signs of presence of stock on site.
40	Public cutting fences, letting stock out etc.	Consultation, interpretation etc. Use of signs explaining presence of stock and their needs whilst present on the site
41	Fencing an 8km boundary with no clear fence lines, installing cattle grids, gates, stiles	Hard work, determination and lots of money
42	Knowing which type of stock is best Knowing if stock will have any negative effects Knowing when optimum condition of habitat has been reached	Trial and error Trial and error Enlist someone with more experience - consult GAP
43	Dogs	Signs (Dogs on leads) in paddocks being grazed but still not solved
44	Monitoring vegetation Getting farmer to remove stock on time at end of year	Volunteers? Not yet solved 'Kick ass' + polite reminders
45	Fencing of common land Supply of suitable grazing animals Public perception	Temporary fencing erected under National Trust Acts Unresolved, but purchase of ponies solves half the problem Talks and guided walks + experimental areas

Site	Problem	Solution
46	Introduction of fencing Movement Water shortage	Daily communication with public and local meetings Good collection procedures and vehicle access Introduction of tanks
47	Getting the Trustees to agree to keeping sheep Keeping sheep in areas without fencing	Presentations, support & guidance of other conservation organisations Using electric fencing
48	Grazier tends to be unco-operative and does not understand our objectives	None yet
49	Fencing and water supply Stock suitability / availability Vandalism of fencing / water supply	Investment in fencing and water supply Grazier is responsible for husbandry Constant repairs
50	Finding appropriate / willing graziers or stock Agreeing internally on levels and periods of grazing Determining constraints / desirable requirements e.g. type of stock, forbidding use of Ivomectin etc.	Currently O.K. Discussion Unresolved
51	Fencing People and dogs	Local newsletter articles, personal approaches, tethered animals introduced to local school children
52	Damage to fencing Visitors' perception of using frightening animals	Regular checks and repairs Talking to them
53	Welfare	Regular checks by gamekeeper for annual fee
54	Disagreement as to welfare issues between people involved with the scheme	Vital to have clear areas of responsibility from the outset
55	Public concern over fencing Concern over dogs	Advance publicity Being brave
56	Public concern over fencing Concern over dogs	Advance publicity Being brave
57	Managing for Adonis Blue and Marsh Fritillary on same site Getting animals to graze steep slopes when more palatable flatter areas available Ticks precluding grazing by cows in calf Obtaining suitable breeds of cattle and sheep Dog worrying	Electric fencing to exclude sheep from Marsh Fritillary breeding area and to enclose sheep on Adonis Blue breeding area at certain times Unresolved Grazing by younger cattle (not in calf)
58	Fencing Dogs	Staff time Warden vigilance

Site	Problem	Solution
59	Fence cutting Installing water supply	Persistence, stock on site Borrowed excavator and used volunteers
60	Grazing unfenced open downland Grazing rough, unproductive grassland Control scrub recruitment & invasive grasses	Using 3 strand wire fencing and flexinet Move stock on quickly, use hardy breeds Unresolved
61	Public reaction S194 consent under Law of Property Act 1925 Erection of ring fence Supervision of livestock	One to one discussion with local Public meeting and one to one discussions Cost met by WES A continuing requirement
62	Financial constraints Public	Unresolved Liaison
63	Fencing and water supply Animal welfare - problem with public perception of ponies on cliff or steep ground Access - complaints about damage to path surface by poaching, dung and new fences / gates	Lots of money spent Signing and publicity Signing, wardening, some paths excluded from grazed compartments, not grazing in busy summer months
64	Convincing farmer to have right number of animals	Unresolved
65	Invasion of perennial weeds: nettle, dock etc. Complete restoration of fences	Application of Roundup Grant from English Nature
66	Provision of adequate lay-back land Provision of stock handling facilities (pens, access, water supply)	Not adequately resolved - current arrangement involves limited use of neighbour's land at high cost High capital investment and continuing high maintenance costs
67	Persuading sheep to eat rank grass and not squill and heather Getting stock grazing in late summer Local perceptions about plant damage caused by grazing	Unresolved Insistence Repeated explanations
68	Getting boundary fenced Ensuring water supply in very dry summer Rounding up animals to move them	Fence it Talk nicely to neighbouring farmer Take as many fast runners as you can
69	Keeping animals where you want them Access and water supply Concern of stock falling off cliff	Fencing Talk nicely to neighbouring farmer Issue parachutes!

Site	Problem	Solution
70	Repair of boundary walls Amount of bracken and lack of grass People leaving gates open	Fund raising and also running 2 enclosures together to reduce area of wall to repair An employee of the commoner has been crushing bracken for 3 years in selected areas Signs on gates
71	Finding suitable stock with the right grazing characteristics Finding a suitable tup at the right price Making contact with organisations who have similar objectives	Contract an experienced Hebridean breeder and supplier of grazing livestock Produced own tups for sale Talk to people and visit
72	Soay sheep released into gorge, expanding population - go onto neighbouring farmers' land and roads	Better fencing, shoot straying rams, got local councils to support sheep for grazing and slow down traffic
73	Finance for fencing	Grant aid
74	Getting the right stock Diversifying from sheep to other stock Public and dogs	 Ponies
75	Obtaining enough cattle to make grazing worthwhile Local opposition to fencing and cattle Dog worrying	Unresolved Full time warden and frequent consultation, interpretation and newsletters - also local publicity Farmer provided very tame, sometimes hand reared animals
76	Landowner unwilling	Experimental grazing
77	Which breed? How many? Dogs	Talk to other wardens Trial and error Visitors' co-operation but on-going problem
78	Convincing others that use of feral goats had not produced control of scrub Convincing others of high stocking rates Being non-academic and trying to convince conservation academics use of livestock in non-agricultural methods	Replaced feral goats by nagging and trial with Highland cattle Private agreement with owners of cattle of 'limited numbers available' for stocking reserve 35 years experience of livestock use UK and overseas, semi-domestic and domestic livestock used - not sheep
79	Finding sufficient cattle due to BSE problem Persuading farmers to graze 'rough areas'	Press release matching BSE and decline in wildlife sites Reduce their overheads by providing a 'lookering' service
80	Too many animals for habitat to support	Gradual reduction in flock numbers, difficult because of herding problems
81	Getting everything fenced Getting good quality rams Transport and pen	Permanent fencing and lots of staff time None yet! English Nature supplied a stock trailer and hurdles on permanent loan

Site	Problem	Solution
82	Getting the grazing period and stocking density right	Accurate monitoring and varying the grazing period
83	Lack of sheep-proof fencing Transport - in order to graze a number of small, isolated sites we have to move sheep regularly Shepherding - at lambing and late winter we have stock in several places and in different directions	Electric fencing; however, had have fencing unit stolen Access to semi-improved grass for some stock and first year lambs for fattening and bought a stock trailer Local support
84	Finding a willing source of stock, livestock unit was under threat of closure for a while Public understanding the need for grazing on abandoned grasslands - not familiar with farming ethos in urban areas Cost - not direct cost but on-going	Convinced higher authorities that grazing sites across the Borough was realistic and possible and this has justified the stock unit's continued funding Good public relations, public meeting, press releases, contact on site None yet
85	The resentment of the general public Water	Public meeting Bring the cattle from RSPB daily
86	Obtaining stock Obtaining rams	Reaseheath College lecturer contacting owners through the Smallholders' Association Reaseheath College lecturer contacting owners through the Smallholders' Association
87	Restoring stock-proof walls and fences Clearing and controlling scrub and bracken to acceptable levels Obtaining local tenant in sympathy with conservation management	Grants through Countryside Stewardship agreement As above plus Countryside Management Service and volunteers Estate now has grazing agreement
88	On smaller sites getting farmers to say yes - problems with people and dog access, loading / unloading We wish to graze site with sheep but open access land We are limited to what breed local farmers possess - nice to be able to try different cattle breeds	Had to offer very low grazing fee - install corral / fencing In end we only graze it with cattle - farmer started to intimidate public with dogs Buy own stock / GAP!
89	Persuade National Trust to manage pasture ourselves National Trust concern on time spent on management	Purchase sheep myself Small flock and slowly build up
90	Persuading management of the value of owning our own stock Handling - wild ponies	Persistence Construction of handling pens
91	Lack of water supply 30 month BSE restriction People liberating cattle, dogs worrying sheep	Use of bowser Use of supplementary feed Patience / vigilance / none

Site	Problem	Solution												
92	Transporting animals to and from sites Catching animals	Grant-aided purchase of four-wheel drive truck and trailer Bought a sheepdog pup. Now have two - no problem												
93	Getting the timing of grazing just right to allow maximum scrub removal but minimum heather damage	Daily checks and adjacent lay-back land for instant removal of stock												
94	ESA objects to decent fencing Keeping out of silage ground behind cliff-top	Find a huge site and let them go Ignore ESA and improve fencing anyway												
95	Over-grazing by sheep Bracken infestation	Reduction of stock Spraying												
96	Adverse local public reaction to fencing	Erect fences initially without major consultation on basis of previous experience with locals												
97	Getting the right stock at the right time	Hampshire County Council purchase of stock												
98	Balancing requirements of stock v. geese Breeding birds - avoid trampling, encouraging tussock formation	Reduce numbers of stock via Countryside Stewardship Reduce numbers of stock via Countryside Stewardship												
99	Finding the right grazier Making sure the grazier follows instruction Getting the regime correct over annual fluctuations	Local radio requests Diplomatic aggression Monitoring												
100	MAFF regulations Cost of suitable staff to tackle variety of livestock Reduction in value of keeping livestock - less profitable commercially	I wish there was one! Simplify variety of breeds and reduce number of animals Keep only livestock that have visitor appeal												
101	Converting from a production orientated to a conservation orientated system Seasonal variations in weather	Unresolved Unresolved												
102	Replacing / repairing nearly all boundary fences Grazier considered part of the site too wet for stock and ditches too dangerous	Obtained Scottish Natural Heritage grant, 50% of costs of main fence from neighbours, used local Scottish Wildlife Trust workforce Temporarily fenced off wet areas and prayed for dry summer (failed!).												
<p>Summary - the problems detailed above may be roughly categorised as follows:</p> <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Obtaining suitable stock at the right times: 17</td> <td>Water provision: 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grazier availability and understanding: 17</td> <td>Public reaction, resistance, perception: 13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fencing: 16</td> <td>Public access: 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Keeping stock enclosed: 6</td> <td>Dogs: 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Stock access/infrastructure: 4</td> <td>Employer/landowner uncertainty: 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Other: 124</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Obtaining suitable stock at the right times: 17	Water provision: 7	Grazier availability and understanding: 17	Public reaction, resistance, perception: 13	Fencing: 16	Public access: 6	Keeping stock enclosed: 6	Dogs: 8	Stock access/infrastructure: 4	Employer/landowner uncertainty: 6		Other: 124
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Provision of water was particularly identified as problematic. This was most frequently solved using bowsers (tractor or four-wheeled drive vehicle drawn water tanks with attached drinkers). However in some instances the longer term solution of digging ponds was adopted or proposed, although clearly this would not be appropriate for all sites.

Public reaction to the introduction of grazing schemes was another recurrent problem; this could vary from the resistance to the fencing of common or previously open-access land, through concern over whether the animals posed a public safety risk, to concern over the welfare of the animals themselves. In most instances these were continuing problems which required continual public consultation, information and education. Public meetings and/or liaison with Parish Councils formed part of the public consultation at some sites. Interpretation boards and signs were used to inform or to request co-operation (e.g. 'dogs on leads'). In some instances this appeared to have been successful but in others problems such as fence-cutting had occurred, potentially allowing stock to roam and dogs to gain access. Public access could also increase the risks of the worrying of stock by dogs. This was sometimes identified as a real problem, but in other cases it was a concern that had not materialised.

In some instances the site owners or employers had expressed doubts as to the need for, or viability of, or impacts of stock grazing. Again explanation and persuasion were the only ways forward in such circumstances and the ability to present evidence from other (presumably successful) grazing schemes was important.

3.10.2 Recurrent Problems Encountered in Established Grazing Schemes

Box 26 records the recurrent problems and solutions reported by respondents with established grazing schemes; the question had asked for problems which were encountered on an annual basis (see Question 29, Appendix 2). As this was a free-form question the comments are again usually recorded *verbatim* but some have been subject to minor editing. "No problems" were recorded for six sites and one respondent stated that the site experienced "few problems" but did not elaborate further. There were no responses to this question for 34 sites and at least some of these may be taken to be free of recurrent problems. (As for Box 25 there is no significance to the numbers of the sites in Box 26 other than to distinguish one site from another).

Box 26: Recurrent problems of established grazing schemes and their solutions

Site	Problem	Solution
1	Lack of suitable livestock	Need to advertise further afield or turn to grazing by horses - which will not be ideal due to grazing behaviour
2	Vandalism of fence	Increased policing
3	Weed control - thistles, ragwort, mugwort	Hand weeding proves laborious and ineffective; advice welcome
4	Variability of grass growth and season Invasive species of weeds and rank vegetation e.g. <i>Deschampsia</i> and thistles	Adopting a flexible approach to grazing arrangements / cattle numbers Frequent topping or periodic hay cutting to suit
5	Dry summers Sheep ailments - flystrike, foot problems etc.	Flexibility - sheep moved off site to alternative grazing Good programme of preventative treatment / effective checking and remedial action
6	Flystrike in mild wet weather Watering in dry summers	Regular drench in these conditions One bowser visit per week; long term solution to be actioned 1998 - dig two new ponds
7	Stocking rates	None
8	Insufficient cattle numbers Some poor livestock husbandry from one of the six farmers Scrub control in very wet areas	Encourage graziers to keep cattle via persuasion, rents, infrastructure Persuasion and policing Persuade graziers to put stock on there and help with livestock checking
9	Supply of animals due to BSE crisis	Pay graziers to graze or buy animals for graziers to graze for 5 years, or obtain grant aid, or own animals yourself
10	Finding the right animals for the vegetation in the area Need more older cattle	Need more of the old breeds of cattle. Who owns herds of Galloways, Devons, Longhorns etc. and who will be able or willing to let them graze here? Relax the over 30 month rule for beef cattle - not sustainable!
11	Graziers overgrazing and not leaving us with enough grass for wintering wildfowl	Much tighter restrictions in the licence
12	Attracting appropriate type of livestock Maintaining interest in local hay making Preventing dominance of <i>Juncus</i> in certain areas	Removal of 30 month slaughter policy. Set up premium scheme for graziers using nature reserve Assist graziers in making and carting off hay; offer reduced prices for later cutting of hay Topping and trial use of weed wiper

Site	Problem	Solution
13	Lack of cattle	Wider advertising and topping
14	Fog fever BSE / cattle industry in crisis Flooding	Set stock suckler herds from June / July Arranging 1998 grazing season has been the most difficult to date but in the end there was still enough demand to fill the reserve Graziers will have to keep stock at home and wait for water to drain off
15	Poaching during wet periods / around feed Obtaining enough animals when we need them Under-grazing Sward too long	Restrict timing of grazing, not allowing supplementary feeding Unresolved, although grazier will change next season Field topped Change grazing - sheep
16	Lack of cattle if farmers object to late start to grazing season and RSPB restrictions	Continue to provide top quality facilities / service at grazing rent below local average
17	Obtaining summer grazing c68	Ring around, approach any local graziers
18	Unable to predict grazing needs and so have a working plan with grazier because of high rabbit numbers Lack of staffing to monitor site and grazing needs Grazing small site of less than 10 acres - not attractive to grazier	Rabbit control - partial due to high cost Money / management - change of attitude Conservation flock - own animals - funds / staff. Fencing - agreement of owner for access, somewhere to treat and winter animals and lay-back
19	Boundary fencing damaged by high tides / winter seas Stock straying off land along public road to east and west	None Highways Dept. installing cattle grids
20	Sheep escaping	Fence repairs
21	Creeping bramble <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	Weed wiping. Goats? Ponies? Weed wiping. Interested in effect of ponies
22	Occasional dog-worrying	No response
23	Different grazing of (or exclusion of) smaller features within a grassland - lead spoil / flushes / scree / tall herb communities Sustainability from a nature conservation perspective of grazing flower-rich grasslands, especially those with grazing-sensitive species such as Jacob's ladder	Some can be enclosed; impossible to do so for others We graze Jacob's ladder one year in three, but it is purely experimental
24	Winter keep. Most of our sites need summer grazing	A system whereby breeding flocks are maintained in summer, and then reduced by shedding lambs / yearlings, such that winter grazing needs are reduced

Site	Problem	Solution
25	Continuing adverse public reaction No vegetation monitoring	None If help was available this is something that we would initiate at the earliest opportunity
26	Electric fencing Dog attacks	Day to day PR. Type of fencing interpretation. Management walks. Selection of suitable areas. Staff with dogs on site with the fencing Prosecution. Interpretation. Day to day PR.
27	Knowing very little about grazing regimes and their effects Knowing nothing about stock management or the economics of grazing Knowing what effect the grazing is having	Reading and judging the effects in practice Guidance Monitoring
28	Dog attacks which have cost hundreds of pounds in vet fees	Dogs belong to travellers so local gypsy liaison officer and police are contacted to evict them. Stock are also moved as far away as possible from encampment
29	Blackthorn spread Cattle grazing in summer and public anxiety	Foliar spray of Garlon Careful timing and information provision
30	Access to a steep site when stock is ill / dead When a sick animal has to recover away from the down	Hope to purchase an ATV Take it home and put in garden
31	Getting the stock to eat <i>Juncus</i> BSE - having to sell at 30 months - reduces profit and grazing effectiveness	Trials at present in hand No response
32	Controlling the grazier Lack of monitoring Lack of lay-back land	Ongoing More staff Money
33	Lack of lay-back land Conflict of conservation interests Monitoring is not coherent, different groups and interests involved	Money Negotiation Rationalisation of grazing / monitoring - more staff
34	Lack of lay-back land Lack of proper monitoring Too many different groups of animals	Money More staff Rationalisation of grazing system - more staff
35	Public perception Public access - gates and fences damaged	Always interpreting the site both with and without stock. Always informing the public of presence of stock on site through temporary signs Always interpreting the site both with and without stock. Always informing the public of presence of stock on site through temporary signs

Site	Problem	Solution
36	Previous stock used - sheep. These are tricky to find on such a large site and get caught in scrub. Prone to dog chasing	Cattle used until site is much more open in years to come
37	Knowing duration of grazing / optimum stocking densities	No response
	Knowing optimum period / time of year for grazing	No response
38	Dogs	Signs in paddocks being grazed: 'Dogs on leads'; still not been solved
39	Supply of grazing animals	Creation of a grazing agency to link graziers with owners / managers of conservation sites
	Fencing of common land	Lobbying to change the laws relating to fencing of common land
	Funding of grazing schemes	Enhanced payments from schemes such as Countryside Stewardship and Wildlife Enhancement Scheme
40	Margins on beef	No response
	Movement of cattle	No response
	Winter feed costs	No response
41	Public and dogs	Still monitoring the problem
	Managing flock organically	No response
42	Increasing loss of floral diversity	Being discussed
	Overgrazing of the land	Being discussed
43	Replacement of current stock (Beulah)	Grazier will convert his own enterprise to Swaledale (similarly hardy) thus obviating need to replace English Nature owned Beulah
	Vandalism of fences / water supply	Constant repairs
	Conflict between conservation management and animal husbandry	Maximum conservation benefit achieved by grazing effort during the winter; grazier reluctant to keep sheep on swards for as long as site manager would like
44	Finding new grazier / stock	Contacting various sources / individuals but may make do with what is available rather than what is desirable
	Volunteer wardens for the reserves don't necessarily have all the time, experience and abilities to fulfil all the requirements of the task	Possibility of recruiting regional Reserves Officers / Wardens or buying such skills / work on a contract basis
	These are relatively small sites and few in number so not necessarily advancing lepidoptera conservation significantly at the landscape scale	No response
45	Visitors complaining to the RSPCA about the stressful (i.e. no food) conditions	Talked to inspectors. They have no problems with us grazing Highlands
	In 3 years 4 complaints about visitors being attacked, shirts being torn by the horns or being chased up trees etc.	Despite requests not to touch or pet the animals visitors still do

Site	Problem	Solution
46	Future castration of males or splitting of herd into single sexes	Build handling facilities and prepare other suitable sites
47	Maintaining correct numbers Educating farmer / grazier on conservation policy Some poor hill boundary fences	Regular counting / communication Discussion In hand for 1998
48	Staff time in looking after stock Staff becoming 'attached' to animals and not viewing them just as a tool for getting the work done	No response No response
49	Staff time in looking after stock Staff becoming 'attached' to animals and not viewing them just as a tool for getting the work done	No response No response
50	Getting animals to graze Adonis Blue breeding area adequately Scrub regrowth	Electric fencing. Not fully resolved No response
51	Welsh Mountain sheep breaking out	Constant vigilance
52	Regrowth from old cut stumps	Cut / poison in winter months - grazing should help control given time
53	Supervision of livestock Finding livestock Too much scrub	Continuing help from volunteer. Hopefully the site can re-enter WES so that we can offset some of the large cost in project staff time Hoping to develop a satellite-assisted locating system Clearance needed - by Project or contractor
54	Financial - lack of manpower, infrastructure, vehicles etc. Lack of lay-back land	Sale of organic produce? Extra income from funding authorities? Terminate project No response
55	Fencing and water supply Animal welfare - problem with public perception of ponies on cliff or steep ground Access - complaints about damage to path surface by poaching, dung and new fences / gates	Lots of money spent Signing and publicity Signing, wardening, some paths excluded from grazed compartments, not grazing in busy summer months
56	Handling animals - difficult to look at / worm etc. Locating anyone who is licensed to dart animals if an operation is needed	Built a crush for examination purposes and worming. Get help from mare and foal sanctuary staff Make the herd more tame to avoid this
57	Supply of stock / availability / cost to grazier	No adequate solution

Site	Problem	Solution
58	Persuading sheep to eat rank grass and not squill and heather Getting stock grazing in late summer Local perceptions about plant damage caused by grazing	Unresolved Insistence Repeated explanations
59	Open up areas of bracken / bramble Avoiding dog chasing Removing dead animals from bottom of cliff	Tractor and swipe areas first, graze in summer months Educate public Matches and gorse / hay / diesel
60	Making time for stock handling	Split the work load - can only be done when you have people trained in stock handling
61	Expanding Soay population	Devise a culling regime - they cannot be safely caught. Shooters must be very professional, timing when no tourists around
62	Increase in goat numbers RSPCA interference. Mastitis problem in two goats	Annual round-up / cull Culled infected goats
63	Obtaining suitable breed of animals to deal with vegetation on site Obtaining sufficient numbers of cattle to make an impact Daily livestock checks needed	Unresolved - pay farmer a possibility Unresolved Currently encouraging local users to help out 'Voluntary Warden Scheme'
64	Not enough lay-back land	A bit hit and miss at the moment. I have 5 acres owned by English Nature but not enough; local landowners can sometimes help out after a hay cut
65	Written 'guidelines' on stocking density per livestock unit that superiors take to be acceptable Seasonal variation in vegetation growth applicable to site - convince others Non-ownership of cattle relates to 100% control of use; also lack of income	Again leading superiors to believe that due to 'limited' stock available stocking rate is therefore limited That seasonal static livestock stocking rates cannot be tolerated. Explanations and site inspection to illustrate need for 'local' livestock management None
66	Finding sufficient animals	Create good relations with existing graziers and ensure each understands how they benefit the site and understand their problems re finishing on poor feeding etc.; provide adequate lookering service and handling facilities
67	Yearly problem of the round-up. Animals are semi-wild, not used to dogs and very agile	Lots of people and five dogs
68	Getting good quality rams	None yet!

Site	Problem	Solution
69	Grazing at the right density at the right time to open up the sward and keep scrub in check	No response
70	Need bigger outlet for live / meat animals	Rare Breed Survival Trust have a market for specialist meat
71	Deciding when to put stock on and off and having enough details about stocking rates Public concern over animal welfare / length of time they are on site etc. Getting stock off the fields when the weather is bad - vehicle access on wet, muddy fields with a trailer load of Highland cattle is difficult	Trial and error React to public's questions and try to avoid conflict between grazing and public use Wait until land dries out - however this can lead to conflict with nature conservation interest by extending the period of grazing
72	Balancing the need to graze with summer flowering plants Control of scrub invasion	Winter / late summer grazing Use volunteers and hand tools
73	Thistles Public perception Poaching / muddy fields in wet winters	Initial spot herbicide treatment - allowing some areas to grow hay crop - regular cutting in June / July Thistles and rough looking pasture land seen by some locals as neglect - gradual acceptance over time - noticeably more flowers and butterflies More flexible stocking levels, reserve of alternative land
74	To find grazier if land becomes available i.e. another grazier finishes contract Vandalism to water troughs - especially pipes / ball-cocks Complaints from members of the public about fencing in fields previously unfenced and cattle where previously none	To have a list of interested graziers to contact in local area / could come from MAFF / NFU Install heavy-duty copper pipes in metal casing and fit metal covers which block off access to the ball-cock Site interpretation (simple laminated sheets explaining why we are now grazing fields). Also countryside staff explaining face to face with users reasons why we are now grazing and fencing
75	Rabbits Maintaining a balanced farming system with sufficient 'in-bye' to winter breeding and rearing stock when pasture is finished, and sensible sequencing of grazing periods on different sites Economic viability	Rabbit control - expensive and labour intensive. Not eligible for grant aid Better co-ordination of various managers involved in the project Reform of CAP. More effective funding of organic farming by MAFF. Direct payments for grazing from site managers
76	Grazing experiment extended - now grazing 20+ sites in Lincolnshire	Work harder and carry a torch
77	Finding really good dogs to bring in sheep	Most dogs are only good enough for one or two years
78	Income doesn't match manpower input	Partially solved through joining Habitats Scheme
79	Lice on cattle	Pour-ons

Site	Problem	Solution														
80	Getting the message across that these areas are valuable	Show them the benefits of grazing regime in terms of the restoration of these grasslands														
81	Not having enough animals	Buy more														
	Possibly starting winter grazing	Various options														
	Allocating priority use for the animals on different sites	Negotiation														
<p>Summary - the problems detailed above may be roughly categorised as follows:</p> <table> <tbody> <tr> <td>Obtaining suitable stock at the right times: 22</td> <td>Lay-back land / Winter keep: 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Grazier availability and understanding: 6</td> <td>Stocking rates: 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Public reaction, resistance, perception: 13</td> <td>Monitoring stock and/or vegetation, staffing: 12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Vandalism / fence cutting: 4</td> <td>Lack of knowledge / experience: 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Dogs: 7</td> <td>Seasonal / weather dependent variation in productivity: 7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Scrub / weed control: 13</td> <td>Veterinary problems: 6</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Other: 46</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Obtaining suitable stock at the right times: 22	Lay-back land / Winter keep: 8	Grazier availability and understanding: 6	Stocking rates: 7	Public reaction, resistance, perception: 13	Monitoring stock and/or vegetation, staffing: 12	Vandalism / fence cutting: 4	Lack of knowledge / experience: 5	Dogs: 7	Seasonal / weather dependent variation in productivity: 7	Scrub / weed control: 13	Veterinary problems: 6		Other: 46
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Many of the problems of the establishment phase of grazing schemes (Box 25) were also recorded as recurrent problems; however, there was perhaps a wider range of recurrent problems (Box 26). Despite the similarities the solutions proposed or adopted also varied more widely in established schemes, presumably as site managers had risen to the challenges.

By far the most frequently reported problem was obtaining suitable stock in the right numbers and at the right times (see summary, Box 26). This was sometimes aggravated by variation in the productivity of the grazing from year to year or on a seasonal basis which in turn could depend on weather conditions. These factors, and variable rabbit populations, made the task of determining optimum stocking rates even more difficult. A flexible approach to stocking was suggested but this could only be adopted if the managing agency had lay-back land or alternative sites, or if the grazer was sympathetic to the constraints of conservation grazing.

Stocking rates were also important in determining whether grazing sensitive (e.g. *Polemonium caeruleum*) or desired (e.g. *Calluna vulgaris*) species were adversely affected. Staffing to monitor the impact of grazing on the vegetation, to check on stock condition and to move animals as necessary was also a frequently reported problem. This would be aggravated at some sites by a lack of knowledge or experience of optimum grazing regimes to achieve the desired aims.

Not surprisingly, some problems were less frequent in established grazing schemes than in proposed schemes: land owners' qualms had clearly been overcome in established schemes and problems with farmers and graziers were less frequent. Water, infrastructure and access arrangements had been made (but worryingly two of the three mentions of access difficulties related to the removal of dead stock). Dogs were a recurrent problem on a number of sites. Provision or maintenance of adequate fencing and the associated problem of straying stock were mentioned but less often than for proposed schemes. Vandalism to fences and other infrastructure was reported more often.

There were still difficulties in finding suitable graziers; to overcome this wider advertising or 'ringing around' were the only solutions adopted by managers, but a suggested alternative was the drawing up and publication of a list of suitable and willing graziers by an agency such as MAFF or the NFU. Where problems with existing graziers persisted the options were negotiation, verbal persuasion or making the grazing more attractive by reducing rents, lightening licence restrictions, providing infrastructure and/or providing staff or volunteers to check the stock. Clearly in most cases these inducements would be a drain on the managing agency's resources.

Other problems could only occur in established projects: the provision of lay-back land and/or winter keep was mentioned frequently. Various veterinary conditions were also mentioned although the opportunity to detail these in earlier questions (see Section 3.6) may have led to under-reporting in the answers to this question. Regular, effective checks on stock and preventative veterinary treatments were used to combat recurrent veterinary problems. Culling was proposed on three occasions: once to remove stock with a potentially infectious disease and twice to reduce numbers in effectively feral flocks that could not be rounded up safely.

Two problems were reported with equal frequency and were second only to the problem of stock availability: continuing adverse public reaction and scrub and/or weed invasion and control. The former was again varied and at various sites involved fear of stock, concern for stock welfare and fencing and public access; as noted above this could lead to vandalism of fences and other infrastructure. The full gamut of public relations actions were suggested - information boards, interpretative materials, management walks and day to day contact. Where vandalism was a problem increased 'policing' and constant repairs were the only options suggested.

Where specified weed invasion involved the typical weeds of grazed land such as *Senecio jacobaea* and *Cirsium arvense*. Weeds were variously tackled by hand-weeding, topping and weed-wiping. Scrub problems were both regrowth from cut stumps and spread into new areas; herbicides had also been used as foliar sprays or stump treatments to control scrub. As scrub control is often an objective of grazing conservation sites the inability of the animals to prevent scrub regrowth or spread may in some instances represent a failure of the scheme. In others it may reflect the difficulties of obtaining the best types of stock in sufficient numbers: in some instances a change in stock type was suggested e.g. using cattle to open up scrubby sites so that sheep could be found and did not become entangled. In other cases a change from farmer/grazier to managing agency ownership of the stock was proposed, but it was recognised that this would require staff, funding and lay-back land.

Changes to laws (e.g. on fencing of common land), grants (e.g. Countryside Stewardship) or policies (e.g. Over Thirty Months Scheme) were the only suggested solutions to some problems. Clearly these are beyond the ability of individual conservation agencies and the non-conservation factors leading to the imposition of these constraints may be sufficient to thwart even a concerted approach. By far the most common solution to the problems encountered was the provision of additional resources; this requirement is not, of course, exclusive to conservation grazing schemes which must vie with other desirable schemes for available resources. The problems of desirable grazing schemes and their possible solution is discussed further in Section 4.0 which deals with the responses to Questionnaire B.

3.11 Other Comments

Respondents were given the opportunity to add any further comments that they wished. Box 27 records these comments with minimal editing as for other free-form responses. In the box each paragraph represents the comments made on one questionnaire return.

Box 27: Additional comments made by respondents

Despite comments from other conservation professions of dislike of grazing animals by urban public, this has not been the case. Comments from public all favourable (so far). Switch from horses to cattle has also gone down well.

Sheep grazing on Dorset heaths isn't seen as 'traditional' but in fact probably was in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. We've grazed this site for 3 years with sheep, which have proved to be easy to manage, achieving our objectives of restoring vegetation and also resilient. Exmoor Horn have proved to be largely immune to pet dogs, easy to handle, and with appropriate, preventative medication, hardy enough for winter grazing on an extremely nutrient deficient ecosystem. We are changing breed (to Portland) because of availability and reducing our overheads, by using someone else's livestock, not for any negative reasons of the Exmoor breed.

I have had a variety of livestock personally as a smallholder over the last 10 years - cattle (fattening), goats (breeding), sheep (max. 35 ewes - breeding + own tup) on acid and neutral grassland. Has included being a licensee and owning land; taking hay from rented land and day to day stock management.

Stoborough is managed from the RSPB reserve at Arne where a PhD student has recently been appointed to study grazing on heathland.

Training of staff to look after livestock. Recently I have acquired the services of a competent and conscientious stockman to do the bulk of the shepherding.

At this site a pragmatic approach is necessary to planning and pricing our grazing, and takes into account not only our objectives, but also our time outlay in relation to the (relatively low) importance of grazing at the site; our relations with neighbours / locals and the needs / wishes of the graziers.

The reserve is grazed by a huge variety of animals that could not be listed previously. We try to avoid too much extra work / difficulties by asking farmers not to send us cows likely to calf while here.

Pick grazier carefully: could you work with them, will they graze as hard as you need, can they appreciate that your 'crop' is the flowers / butterflies on the site and is as important to you as his / her lamb crop is to him / her? Support your grazier if you have one. Get some training on stock handling, disease and welfare so that you can talk to your grazier and understand their position.

To minimise stock from straying off the land we found that by barring them up in an enclosure over night and letting them out again at 8am for the first month helped stop them wandering. Previously they were lifting at 6am and then just walked along the road into the distance. Now they lift and walk around a field for an hour and when we let them out they go straight onto the marsh and start eating.

Our main problem is not having the knowledge to decide which type of animal and breed etc. are best for which habitats and how long they should graze the sites for. It seems that few people have a thorough understanding of these issues at present, but I hope that with the FACT network we can begin to learn more. Other problems we have are access, public opinion and availability of licensed graziers, as we don't have the resources or expertise to handle our own livestock.

It would be great to use organic herds and be able to control grazing closely but have no time and don't know where the herds are.

Practical problems can be solved. Balancing public access and their perceived ownership will prove to be the biggest and most difficult problems.

If you live some distance away, set up a rota of local people to check the stock and feed when necessary. ATB courses in sheep management, lambing etc. are very helpful.

You need an enthusiastic stockperson and skilled monitoring.

Cattle are used to remove tufted vegetation and through their perambulations to push through dense scrub, allowing light and access. Cutting action of hooves beneficial if carefully managed. Sheep are used to target scrub re-growth, rank vegetation and fine vegetation. Both groups of animals act as foci for the public: 'the cute factor'.

Keep fighting and never give up.

Think very carefully about compartmentalizing your site. Extra fences, quite apart from initial cost, will require additional maintenance. Although a complex system of compartments theoretically permits 'fine-tuning' of grazing effort, the temptation is to rotate stock around compartments in turn, which may create problems for some invertebrates, by creating dramatic variations in sward height / structure.

They always take more time than you imagine. Takes the same time to check, feed etc. two as it does a dozen! People are the worst problem so far. Electric fences always 'go-down' in the most inconvenient way possible.

Take heart from the fact that once animals are in place, the majority of visitors are happy to see them. Ensure that you can supply the animals with enough water.

Would be more beneficial in some areas to be able to 'mix and match' stock to specific vegetation problems.

Welsh Blacks much more easy to handle than Welsh Whites. Helping to have a good relationship with local farmer.

Try and inform as many locals as possible of grazing scheme. If new fencelines are needed, put them up rapidly and get stock on soon as possible when fences complete. If possible graze with hardy breeds but any grazing is better than no grazing in the long-term.

Taking the public with us has been very important here. We have quite a lot of local support. Some supporters have spoken up for heathland grazing at a public enquiry on nearby Chobham Common. There has been a considerable amount of effort put into convenient access onto the site - easy boxed equestrian gates and kissing gates. Also, aware that most people visit the site with dogs, we have not considered sheep and goats as part of the extensive grazing, though, in an ideal world we might want to.

Get a livestock-experienced employee to run it. Look for local grazier first.

Conflict with farmer requirement for stock and nature conservation. Sometimes difficult to get correct stocking levels and timing. Some areas would benefit from grazing in summer e.g. to control blackthorn but this conflicts with busiest time of year and visitors complain 'flowers are being eaten'. Ownership vs. tenants' stock. Benefits of flexibility versus serious time implications and lack of animal husbandry experience.

We need a mix of grazing, historically there have been sheep and cattle as well as ponies. We don't underestimate the effect rabbits have which is considerable. Poaching is important and the ponies are not as effective as cattle. Sheep obviously graze in a different way and they eat ragwort which, due to previous overgrazing by cattle, has invaded the site.

My animals may be available for grazing management of other sites depending upon if a suitable agreement can be reached. Would like to talk to other Hebridean owners in the area.

A range of grazing regimes exist on saltmarsh areas within the Ribble estuary. Plenty of examples of the effects of using sheep vs. cattle or a mix of both, but on such large sites it is not possible to quantify effects of individual breeds.

Foaling on cliffs is not recommended; neither is running a stallion in the breeding season. Don't allow horses to eat peoples' favourite plants such as Sea pinks.

In terms of the Hebridean Project undertaken here, the initial outlay for the animals has been low and the scheme has relied heavily on the generosity of the landowner / tenant in terms of money / time and facilities for the continued running

of the flock on an annual basis. As yet we have not incurred a major vet's bill nor is any rent charge incurred for lay-back grazing. You also have to keep in mind that you are not competing in sales with neighbouring producers on whom you may rely for advice and assistance. You have to weigh up very carefully the costs of initial purchases of livestock and handling equipment plus costs of time and ongoing maintenance costs against the costs of renting or hiring a flock with stock person to achieve your goal.

If tenant, owners co-operation is vital! Sheep / cattle grazing trials successful 1987-91 but not accepted by owner. Detailed monitoring programme continuing.

Try voluntary grazing agreement with livestock owner who has breed most suitable. They attend to insurance, transport and pre/post veterinary treatment before livestock settle on SSSI, NNR etc. Site owner / manager determines number of stock, for how long, area suitably fenced, provision of drinking water. West Highland cattle are hardiest breed in UK, adaptable to any environment. Slow maturing which gives advantage of being irrespective of vegetation quality. Fast growth rates do not apply to this breed, use horns to break down scrub, can survive on very poor vegetation.

I prefer the arrangement we have and would not recommend any Reserve Manager to 'own' the sheep unless it is part of a whole farm enterprise. The farming part of the job is very demanding and can deflect work from the Nature Conservation objectives, unless of course the whole site is a farm, when a farm manager would be more appropriate.

Choose your breed carefully. We bought Soays, which are excellent at eating coarse stuff but, being small, there are more feet to feet to trim/fleeces to pluck per grazing unit and Soays are notorious for escaping and being hard to catch. Hebrideans are more workable though still small. Herdwicks have proved a good compromise, larger (but still a small / medium breed), docile and manageable but thrifty and hardworking, also meat tastes very good. There is a small specialist market for Soays but our butcher only sold reasonable quantities coming up for Christmas and restaurants did not listen to his cooking instructions - so take care who you sell to or you'll get a reputation for tough meat. Also, we sell all our meat as 'hogget' i.e. over 1 year old, as the breeds do not grow to commercial size in less than a year.

Having other people to discuss it with - I didn't have anyone and have developed things from reading / researching the topic. Also people setting up grazing projects in urban / sub-urban areas will have different problems to overcome and it would be good to talk / meet with other people who are in the same situations.

One problem we have to face is who pays for water rates when no stock are in particular field/area? Final solution was farmer paid when he was using fields whilst we (City Council Countryside Service) paid rest of the year.

Exmoor ponies are brilliant - more people should be using them.

Choosing correct breed to suit types of grazing and weather conditions (native breeds).

Go for it. The animals are great. Go for rare primitive breeds. The public love them and the animals seem able to look after themselves.

We are currently very unscientific about grazing. The Umbra has been grazed for 15 years and seems to do well, Milford has been grazed for 2 years and it's too early to tell if we are at the correct level.

Our grazing livestock are kept essentially as display animals to attract fee paying visitors. Their use as grazing animals is a secondary function, albeit still an important role. Choice of animal is linked to its attractiveness to visitors. We choose replacement stock very carefully - depending on their perceived appeal and ease of animal care. Their value in terms of grazing efficiently is only a minor consideration.

There is often no prescriptive solution. The situation evolves and develops year by year.

The majority of comments were site-specific and cannot be easily summarised; however, there are a number of valuable suggestions that are based on respondents' direct experience of conservation grazing and which may therefore be useful in providing answers to problems or questions at other sites. A few breeds receive additional commendations: Exmoor Horn sheep on lowland heath, Highland cattle and Exmoor ponies. One respondent compares Soay, Hebridean and Herdwick and comes down in favour of Herdwick, but two others seem content with Hebrideans. "Welsh Blacks" (= Black Welsh Mountain sheep) are stated to be easier to handle than "Welsh Whites" (Welsh Mountain sheep) and rare, primitive sheep receive a further recommendation. Several respondents consider the desirability of, or additional benefits from, mixed grazing; presumably some at least of these are the respondents who desired an additional grazing species to that already utilised (see Section 3.9).

The demands on staff of keeping stock is considered by several commentators, but opinions differ on the best way forward. Training of existing staff (e.g. using Agricultural Training Board courses) is recommended by some, if only to be able to understand and talk sensibly to graziers. Employment of trained stockpersons is recommended by others; to a degree which option is better depends on both the number, type and ownership of the stock to be used and on the willingness and interest of the staff involved. One respondent makes it clear that the demands of the "farming part of the job" are great and can deflect from nature conservation objectives; another emphasises that, within limits, numbers of animals are not directly proportional to the time needed: "takes the same time to check, feed etc. two as it does a dozen!".

Despite the problem of public perception identified in implementing or running a grazing scheme (see Sections 3.10 and 4.0) the majority of 'other' comments concern the positive reactions of the public to grazing animals. In several instances this related to the type of stock kept e.g. cattle preferred to horses and the "public love" primitive breeds.

Finally the need for understanding between graziers/farmers and conservation managers is a recurrent theme. It is clear from the comments that this has to be two-way process: graziers are not employees with animals as tools but are trying to make a living from their animals. Equally nature conservation is the main objective on the sites surveyed and the graziers need, as one respondent put it, "to appreciate that your 'crop' is the flowers / butterflies on the site and is as important to you as his/her lamb crop is to him/her".