

LOWLAND DERBYSHIRE LBAP FORUM SEPTEMBER '06

GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

REPORT BACK FROM WORKSHOP GROUP

Grazing issues:

- Management regimes required by formal agreements often difficult for small management groups to adhere to for small grassland sites – this issue needs flagging up with NEngland
- Stock availability – difficult to get any /or the right sort;
- Water supply and other infrastructure- expensive and often subject to vandalism on small sites eg LNRs
- Need for fencing, can be complex and expensive on smaller sites;
- Problems of mixing stock – owners may not want this – disease issues;
- Need for stock movement license to move stock between sites – a problem for ‘flying flocks’ ;
- Ensuring that stock is taken off at appropriate time – always need somewhere else to put it;
- Stock worrying and vandalism a problem especially in urban areas – anything with horns is a deterrent;
- Vehicle access always necessary for machines or stock- sometimes this proves impossible;
- Difficulties of ensuring that there is a hay cut before aftermath grazing;
- Size of area – too small can be a deterrent to grazing or any management.
- Mow walks to keep visitors away from stock

Cutting issues and ongoing management

- Contract cutting expensive for small areas – need list of sensitive/reliable contractors
- For LAs or larger land owners e.g. Nat Trust its difficult to break long tenancy agreements or informal arrangements with graziers in order to start a more sympathetic regime = need an example of a tenancy grazing license which could be used as a basis by estates departments in all organizations
- Need to work with or influence estates departments about biodiversity, landscape and access – the MEANS is grazing - , grazing is not the END!
- Difficult to dispose of arisings
- The local butcher can often be a good contact of you are looking for someone who wants to graze a few head of stock locally;
- Timing is critical but on small sites if machinery, expertise or contractor not available, often need to wait for city and then wait for collection f grass;
- Need to ensure that ragwort etc is excluded if you want to attract someone to take hay – this IS something that volunteers can be used for.

- If an area is very small there are other options to grazing eg use volunteers to brush cut, rake and make contacts with locals who might want hay for bed/feed, or make grass snake piles, possibly on another site.
- Contractors V volunteers- vols useful all year eg ragwort pulling but organizational issues eg insurance, H& S- BTCV insurance recommended. But advice on Insurance MUST be sought. Advice on training also needed. Is the onus with the land owner or the management group ?

Machinery Ring

Most people in both workshops did not know about the ring, but further enquiry from Steve Creswell indicated that it may be pretty moribund – need to look at again with a view to and revitalize, especially for voluntary groups.

Funding

- Awards for all – up to £10k
- BTCV Chestnut fund – very small
- DCC green grants – up to £500
- BBC Breathing Places
- Landfill tax credits
- Derbyshire Environment Trust for BIFAA Viridor etc
- SITA
- National Forest Company,

Management objectives

- Depends on who is managing and what resources will be available
- Setting priorities for site and management group – only set priorities you can meet.
- Limited management regimes lead to different grassland NVC types may become the same, there will be a loss of diversity. Is this BAD?
- Is it acceptable to allow change e.g. to scrub or other grassland type?
- Scrub v grassland how much?
- Ask yourself what you want, what you need, what you can do.

Flying flock for non- agric sites

- Do we have enough sites
- Welfare issues
- Neighbour views
- Shepherding
- Winter grazing.
- Possibly use value in meadows infrastructure to match demand/supply re land management
- Ask DW T re DWT flying flock

In house management

- Resources?

- Skills issue
- Internal contractors – changing regime
- Message about reducing resources – conservation management can be cheaper,
- BUT need for kit to take arisings off, and this is expensive.
- Need for interpretation of sites.

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