

Intensive Winter Grazing Regulations – what does it mean for me?

There have been some changes to the Government's Intensive Winter Grazing (IWG) rules. This factsheet explains the amended IWG rules for farmers.



What is intensive winter grazing (IWG)?

IWG is where livestock (cattle, sheep, deer) are fed high yielding annual forage crops (for example swedes, kale, and fodder beet) in situ, over winter (1 May to 30 September). This results in high stocking densities as animals are confined to a small feeding and loafing area.

Why do we need intensive winter grazing rules?

IWG is considered one of the higher risk farming activities. Good wintering practices ensure that animals are adequately and cost-effectively fed, while protecting animal welfare and the natural environment. To support the implementation of good IWG practices on all farms, the Government has established a set of IWG regulations.¹

What do the intensive winter grazing rules mean for farmers?

Some farmers may need to make a few changes to their IWG practices in response to the amended IWG regulations. There are now three pathways for farmers wanting to utilise IWG:

- IWG as a permitted activity
- Develop a freshwater farm plan
- Obtain a resource consent.

IWG as a permitted activity

IWG is permitted, i.e., you can include IWG in your farming system without a resource consent, if the following conditions are met²:

Slope	Establish IWG forage crop on land that is 10 degrees or less, determined by measuring the slope over any 20 metres of distance (see section below 'how do I measure slope?').
Critical Source Areas	Ensure critical source areas (CSAs) are not grazed, vegetation within CSAs is maintained, and there is no cultivation or harvesting of annual forage crop within CSAs.
Pugging	Take 'reasonably practicable steps' to minimise adverse effects of pugging on freshwater. You may be required to show evidence to a council enforcement officer, so keep records such as photos, a diary of activities etc.
Re-establish vegetation	Re-establish ground cover vegetation as soon as practicable after livestock have finished grazing. Again, you may be required to show evidence to a council enforcement officer, so keep records such as photos, a diary of activities etc.
Proximity to waterways	Livestock must be kept at least 5 metres away from the bed of any river, lake, wetland, or drain (regardless of whether there is any water in it at the time).
Maximum area	The area of the farm that is used for intensive winter grazing is no greater than 50 ha or 10% of the area of the farm, whichever is greater.
Expanding IWG	Limit the area of IWG on your farm to the same area that was established during the reference period (1 July 2014 and 30 June 2019).

Any IWG activity above and beyond these limits will require a certified freshwater farm plan (if available) or a resource consent.

¹ As part of the Resource Management (National Environmental Standards for Freshwater) Regulations 2020.

² Please note that some councils may also include winter grazing rules in their regional plans, and these rules may be more stringent than the national regulations. If you're unsure, please check with your local council.

Develop a freshwater farm plan

This option is currently unavailable as Government is still developing freshwater farm plan regulations.

Obtain a resource consent

If you require a resource consent, visit the B+LNZ factsheet 'Intensive Winter Grazing and how to apply for a resource consent', available at the [B+LNZ knowledge hub](#). You may also like to talk to your local council staff. With good management practices, resource consents are usually quite simple to obtain and will enable you to undertake your required intensive winter grazing.

When do the IWG rules apply?

The IWG rules will apply to IWG activities from 1 November 2022.

What is a critical source area?

Under the IWG regulations, critical source areas are defined as landscape features such as a gully or swale that accumulate runoff and deliver (or have the potential to deliver) contaminants to freshwater. Visit the [B+LNZ knowledge hub](#) for more information about critical source areas, and how to manage them.

How do I measure slope?

There are many apps available for download onto your smart phone that can help you to measure slope. Some examples include 'Laser Level & Clinometer'; 'Clinometer + bubble level'; 'Smart Level'; 'Clinometer'. You can find these and more in your app store. Some regional councils have also developed useful videos explaining how to measure slope, such as [Environment Southland](#).



***i* Need more information**

For more information about the good management of intensive winter grazing, refer to B+LNZ's website at www.beeflambnz.com/wintergrazing

If you need more support to understand the winter grazing regulations, talk to your local council staff.

Attend a B+LNZ farm planning workshop. Visit the [B+LNZ events calendar](#) to find events near you.



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