

Smart wintering in Otago

Winter crops are an important source of livestock feed between May and September. Good management of winter grazing (including intensive grazing of grass and baleage) can help prevent environmental and animal welfare issues.

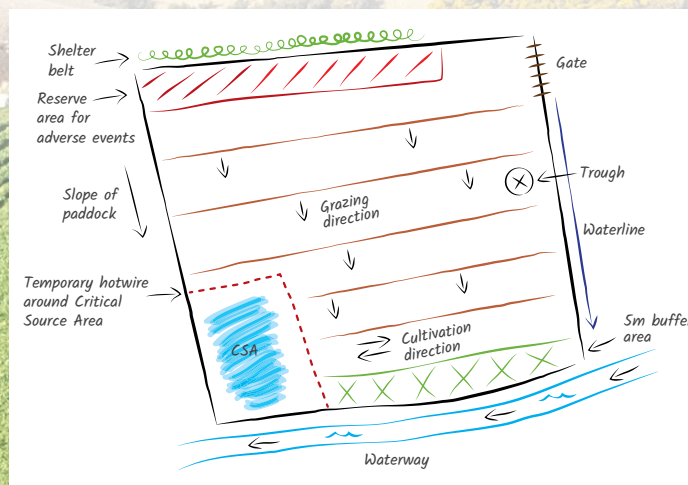
Good winter grazing management:

- supports animal health and welfare
- protects topsoil
- reduces loss of sediment and nutrients and prevents harmful bacteria reaching waterways
- ensures a contingency plan for bad weather.



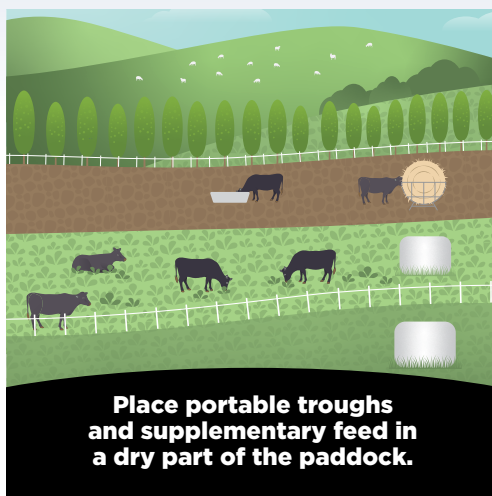
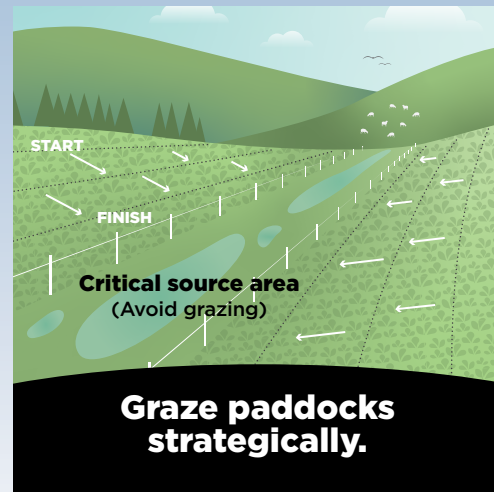
Setting up for good grazing practice
(Credit: DairyNZ)

Focusing on good management can help you reduce risks no matter what rules are in place. This applies to all stock types.



Example of a winter grazing paddock plan
(Credit: B+LNZ)

April 2025



Credits: B+LNZ

Note, in addition to any regional rules, national regulations for intensive winter grazing require:

- a 5-metre-wide buffer from any river, lake, wetland, or drain
- critical source areas (CSAs) vegetated — not cultivated, harvested, or grazed.

Critical source areas (CSAs) are parts of the paddock that can channel overland flow directly to waterways, e.g. gullies, swales, very wet areas, spring heads, waterway crossings, stock camps and vehicle access routes.

Winter checklist

Get your written winter grazing plan done early and share it with your team

- Include lessons from last year.
- Ensure clear expectations for everyone on farm.
- Use it as proof of good practice.
- If using graziers, check their plan.
- Remember to record NAIT movements within 48 hours.

Scan for ORC
wintering plan
template



Preplace baleage and recycle plastic

- Place supplementary feed before grazing to reduce wet soil compaction.
- Locate feed in dry areas, high points, away from waterways and CSAs.
- Recycle or properly dispose of baleage wrap.

Look after your animals' welfare

- Have adequate feed and water available. Use a feed budget or feed planner.
- Include at least a 10% buffer in your winter feed budget.
- Transition animals onto and off winter feed.
- Give animals enough space for normal feeding, resting, and social behaviour.
- Have stock water / portable troughs in each break.
- Check stock health often. Prevent calving and lambing on mud.
- Shift stock to a suitable surface before birthing — to give calves and lambs a good start.
- Have access to shelter and well-drained ground for lying on.
- Take actions in extreme or prolonged wet weather (include them in your wintering plan).

Protect buffers and critical source areas like swales and gullies

- Fence off CSAs to exclude stock (no grazing of CSAs).
- Consider sediment ponds or traps downstream of wintering areas.

Leave at least a 5-metre setback from rivers, lakes, wetlands, or drains.

Graze paddocks strategically

- Fence breaks across slopes. Graze from the top down. Standing crop acts as a filter.
- OR, if there is a waterway in the paddock, start grazing furthest from it and leave a buffer at the bottom of the slope.
- Move portable troughs with the break.
- Locate troughs away from wet areas and CSAs.
- Back fence to limit unnecessary stock movement (reduce soil damage and runoff).

Get support or advice if uncertain

- See back page for industry support and one-on-one help.
- Contact ORC to see if an IWG plan workshop is coming to your area:
orc.govt.nz/iwgworkshops

Take photos to demo your good practice.

Keep up the good work!

Otago contacts for free support and advice:

- On Farm Support (MPI) 0800 70 71 33 | OtagoOFS@mpi.govt.nz
- Beef + Lamb New Zealand 0800 BEEFLAMB (0800 233 352) | enquiries@beeflambnz.com
- DairyNZ 0800 4 DairyNZ (0800 4 324 7969) | info@dairynz.co.nz
Dairy farmers can also contact their milk company for information. Fonterra Farm Source 027 703 6550
- Deer Industry NZ 04 473 4500 | info@deernz.org
- Federated Farmers 0800 327 646 | 0800@fedfarm.org.nz
- OSPRI 0800 482 463 | info@ospri.co.nz
- Otago Regional Council Catchments Team 0800 474 082 | catchments@orc.govt.nz

OR contact your local catchment group. Find out who it is by calling Otago Catchment Community on 027 418 3414 | admin@otagocatchments.co.nz

If you see issues of concern, please contact:

- Federated Farmers for confidential industry support 0800 327 646
- MPI for animal welfare concerns 0800 00 83 33
- ORC Pollution Hotline to report air, land or water pollution 0800 800 033

QR codes for further information about wintering:

Open your smartphone camera, point it at the QR code, and tap the link that appears.



Beef + Lamb
New Zealand
beeflambnz.com



Deer Industry NZ
deernz.org



MPI
mpi.govt.nz



DairyNZ
dairynz.co.nz



FAR
far.org.nz



Otago Regional
Council
orc.govt.nz

**Finding it
tough?**

The Otago Rural Support Trust is here to help. Call 0800 787 254
or www.rural-support.org.nz/Regions/South-Island/Otago

RuralSupport