



**Leaving Cert Agricultural
Science**

Free Notes

Grassland



There are 3 main categories of grassland:

1) Rough Mountain or hill grazing

- Poor quality, acidic and shallow grass on the land and often on peaty soils
- The land may be limed and reseeded in order to improve its fertility and production
- **Example of grasses the land is taken up with is heather, gorse, bracken and scrub rather than grasses.**
- **It is characterised by large range in composition, low stocking rates and low production.**

2) Permanent grassland

- This is grassland that is never ploughed.
- It is different from *Hill Grazing* because it is dominated by perennial grasses and scrub, and trees are rare
- Botanical composition: Variable consists of number of grasses from higher quality grasses such as perennial ryegrass (PRG) and to poorer grasses such as bent grasses.
- The stocking rate is higher due to better quality of grasses present
- The production levels are much higher with better LWG.

3) Leys

- A Ley is a field or pasture sown by the farmer and is grazed by livestock solely.
- Little variability in botanical composition e.g. PRG and Clover dominate
- High stocking rates due to highest quality grass species
- High levels of production in animals due to better LWG



Characteristics of Grass

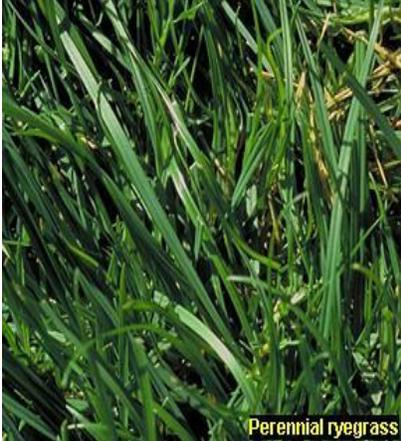
- Grassland in Ireland is used solely for feeding livestock.
- Therefore the agricultural importance of any grassland is measured in three ways: *Productivity, Palatability* and *Digestibility*.
- **Productivity** refers to the ability of a grass to produce large amount of herbage.
- It also refers to the ability to respond to a fertiliser.
- Perennial ryegrass has the highest productivity while mat grasses have low productivity.
- **Palatability** refers to taste etc, in other words how appealing the grass is!
- Sheep and cattle are selective eaters and will only eat the most palatable grass.

- Therefore the sward should be made up of appealing varieties.
- PRG and IRG are the most palatable grasses followed by cocksfoot.
- **Digestibility** is a rating of the ability of an animal to digest a certain feed.
- It is measured in terms of DMD (Dry Matter Digestibility) – how much of the dry matter the animal can digest.
- Digestibility of grass varies throughout the grass’s year also.
- Before flowering the DMD may be 80 – 90%, and after flowering as little as 50%.

Q) Discuss the importance of the following grass species:

a) Red + White Clover



<p>b) Perennial Ryegrass</p>	 <p>Perennial ryegrass</p>
<p>c) Italian Ryegrass</p>	
<p>d) Timothy</p>	

e) Cocks Foot Grass



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