

The future is bright, the future is grass

Mike Miller, Mount Pleasant Farm

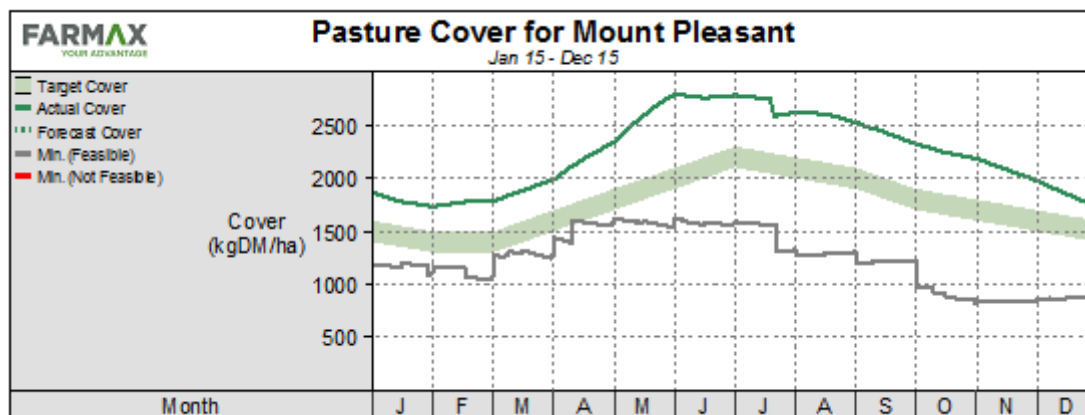
Mike has had an interesting few months travelling around the world (Canada, Australia, New Zealand) as part of his [Nuffield Scholarship](#). His focus has been how to increase sheep production off forage, especially during the winter. He's seen sheep being wintered on standing maize crops in Canada and heard about the benefits of herbal mixes for stock and land.

Mike has been involved in the All Grass Wintering (AGW) project that EBLEX has been running with SAC consulting for the last three winters. Through the project he's seen the potential of managing grass differently and has started to rotationally graze. He sees the value of his high clover leys after ten years in organic farming.

Previously he was share farming 1,400 ewes but he's shifting his focus back to his 108 ha of owned land. He currently runs a flock of around 300 Mules and NZ Suffolk x Mules with all lambs being finished quickly off forage. Mike has also started to breed NZ Suffolk rams in partnership with Robyn Hulme of EasyRams - currently he has around 50 ewes with plans for expansion. He is rationalising his suckler cows to around 50 with the aim of them all calving in the spring and selling the calves as stores in the autumn.



Mike has started to use Farmax, a system he saw in New Zealand, because of the shift back to focussing on his owned land and expansion plans. Currently his file is predicting that pasture covers will reach 2,700 kg DM per ha in May, June and July with a target of around 2,000 kg DM per ha. His current stocking rate means that his demand through the spring is between 9-12 kg DM per ha.



His hope is to buy some Maedi-Visna accredited mules to expand his commercial flock and also to sell forage if necessary. He will be using monthly pasture cover measurements to keep track of what is happening and whether the predictions are correct.

Mike is investigating options for establishing herbal mixes at home and believes they will help to increase the liveweight gain of his lambs. He is also considering lambing on them, like the systems he has seen in NZ and Australia.

Get in touch



Mike is interested in talking to people with experience of herbal mixes.

Please contact him via Twitter [@mutchmiller](#) if you'd like to chat.

[The final report for AGW project and Farmax final report can be found here](#)
[For more information download the BRP+ document on all grass wintering of sheep](#)