

GRAZERS[®] UPDATE

The Geese Have Landed

A field trial concerning Barnacle geese grazing on grass at a farm in Gruinart, Isle of Islay, Scotland was carried out in Spring 2015.



Barnacle Geese grazing on young grass

Aim: To give the grass a break for as long as possible to allow some re-growth, just before the geese migrate to Iceland. This would create some early grass for ewes and lambs, plus a chance to conserve some grass for winter fodder.

Timing: April 2015

Crop: Young grass

Rates Applied: 500ml, 1 litre and 5 litres in 250 litres of water per hectare in strips across the field.

Conditions: Extremely poor — It was a very wet, cold winter and spring which made timing and application very difficult.

Bird numbers: 30,000 to 40,000 Barnacle geese habitually land on Islay each year (numbers monitored by Scottish Natural Heritage).

Application: Grazers was applied in April 2015 during a dry week when ground conditions allowed. A second application was not possible.

Crop state: The grass had been heavily grazed all winter. There were no signs of re-growth prior to application.

Results: After treatment, the geese landed as normal at 6am and walked across all treated strips without grazing (regardless of application rates). They then hopped over the fence into the next (untreated) field where they grazed. This pattern continued for 7 days when it rained heavily again and geese were seen to graze the treated areas. Normal grazing pressure was seen after 10 days.



Barnacle Geese in flight over Islay

“30,000 to 40,000 migrating Barnacle geese overwinter on Islay every year.”

Conclusion: Under these very extreme circumstances, 7-10 days effect of Grazers was noted. The farmer who applied and monitored the trial said that it didn't have sufficient effect this particular year due to conditions. However, in a drier winter and spring, allowing a further application, he would consider using Grazers again as a tool to increase the growing season.

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