



Grass: Exploiting the potential

Liz Genever

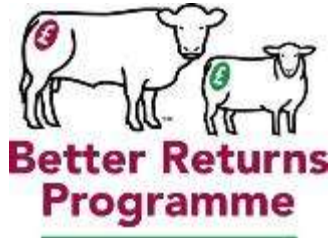
@lizgenever



Plan



- What is EBLEX up to?
- Where should we be?
- Challenges



Background



- Division of Agriculture and Horticulture
Development Board
- English Levy Board
 - Lamb - 60p (producer) and 20p (processor)
 - Beef - £4.05 (producer) and £1.35 (processor)



PROFIT from grass

FARMERS GUARDIAN | EBLEX | DAIRYCO



GRASS WATCH

In association with EBLEX



Manual 1 – Improving pasture for better returns
 Manual 3 – Improving soils for better returns
 Manual 4 – Managing clover for better returns



Manual 5 – Making grass silage for better returns
 Manual 6 – Using brassicas for better returns
 Manual 7 – Managing nutrients for better returns



Manual 8 – Planning grazing strategies for
 Cereals directory
 Home grown forage directory



Current Focus



- Grazing club
- Grazing discussion groups
- System approach

87% never
measure
swards

**SOCIAL
NORM**



Welcome to EBLEX

The organisation for the English beef and sheep industry



Tough standards. Tender results.

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Grazing Club

The EBLEX BRP Grazing Club is for all beef and sheep producers who want to:

- Improve grass yields and quality
- Improve animal performance off grass
- Cut production costs
- Improve their returns

Here there are a range of resources to help achieve these objectives, including case studies, reports from events and expert viewpoints.

Grazing Club members also receive a monthly email newsletter which is full of tips and up-to-the-minute advice. **Email us** quoting 'Grazing Club' in the title of the email to sign up.

As with any club, members can share and swap ideas on how they make the most of grass. Join the Grazing Club conversation on **twitter** – just follow **#grazingclub**.

Better returns programme

[Better Returns Programme](#)

[BRP bulletins](#)

[BRP+](#)

[BRP signup](#)

[BRP steering groups](#)

[Cattle and Sheep Health and Welfare Project](#)

[Grazing club](#)

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Better
Production



Stocktake data

- Cost of production

£ per cow	Average	Bottom third	Middle third	Top Third
Output (less replacements)	445.34	385.48	425.96	496.14
Total variable costs	194.48	203.15	198.29	186.31
Gross margin	250.86	182.32	227.67	309.83
Total fixed costs	538.97	1066.17	521.20	412.02
Net Margin	-288.11	-597.85	-293.54	-102.19

Stocktake data

- Cost of production

£ per ewe	Average	Bottom third	Middle third	Top Third
Output (less replacements)	86.09	85.24	88.99	83.07
Total variable costs	34.15	47.78	39.48	20.56
Gross margin	51.94	37.46	49.51	62.51
Total fixed costs	68.46	103.95	66.44	52.10
Net Margin	-16.51	-66.49	-16.96	10.41

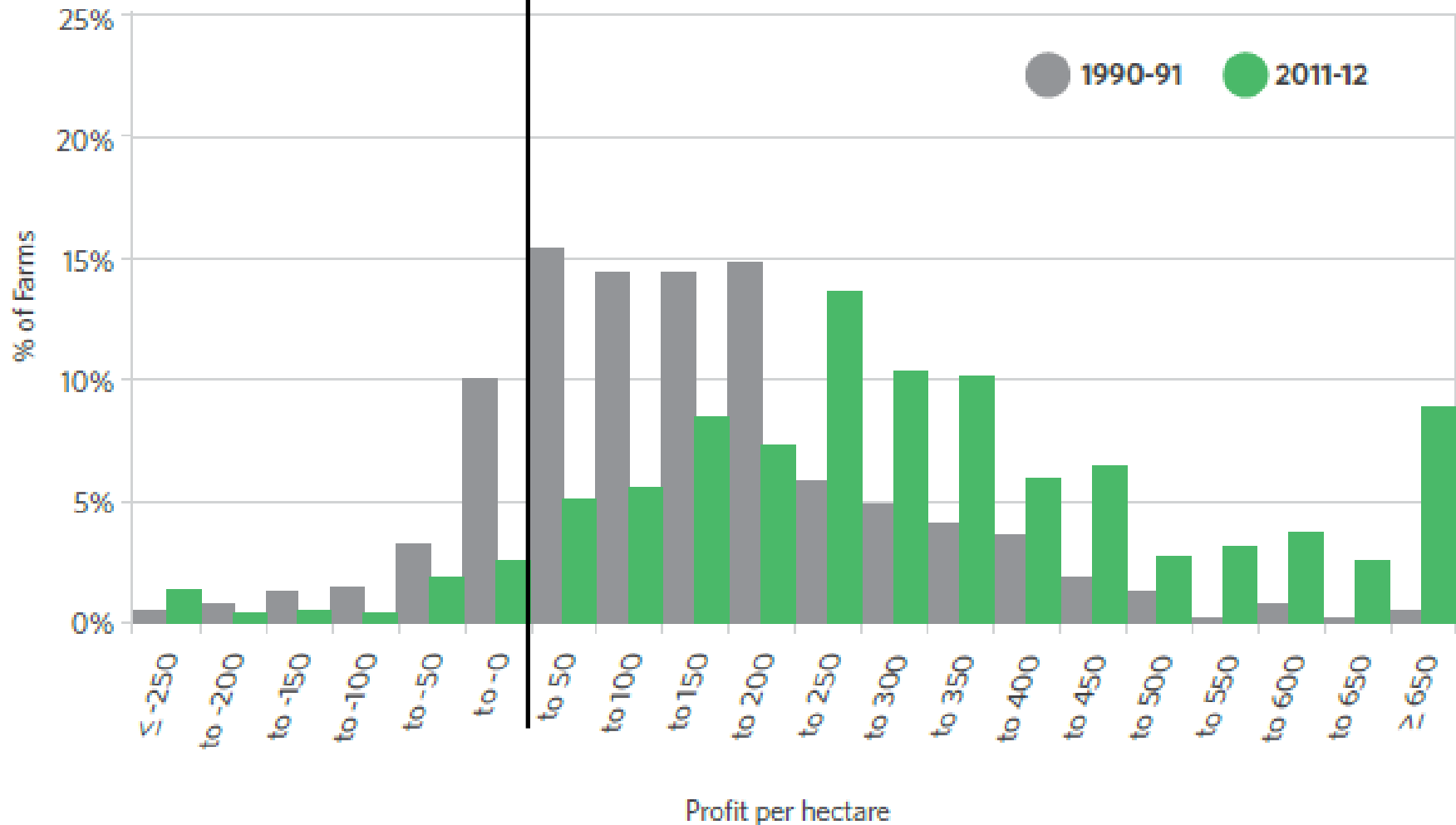


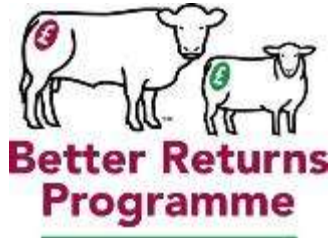
Better Returns Programme



FARM PROFIT VARIABILITY

Source: Beef + Lamb New Zealand Economic Service, Sheep and Beef Farm Survey

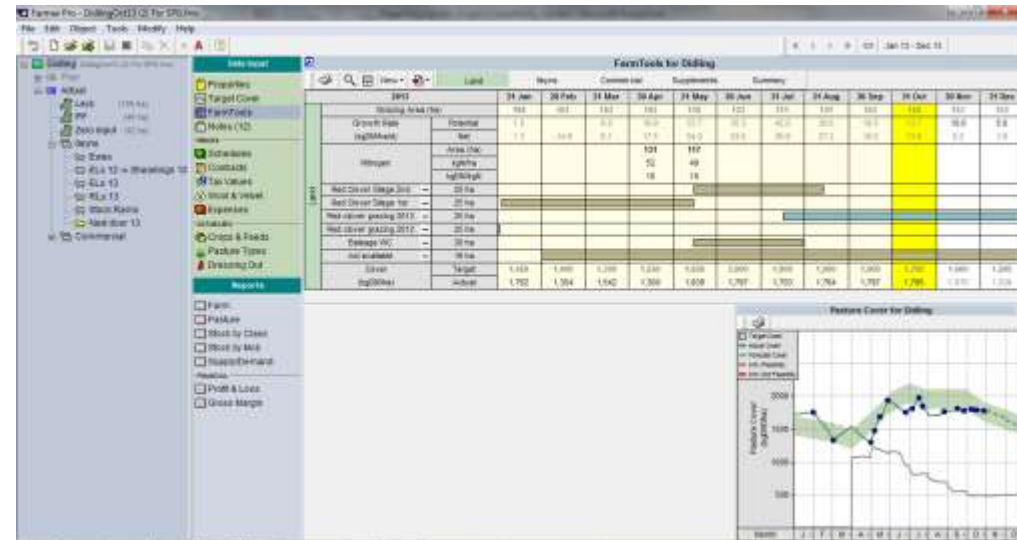


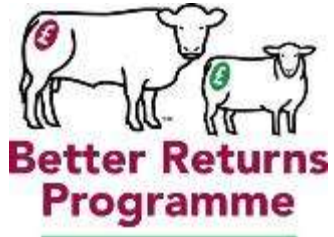


Farmax

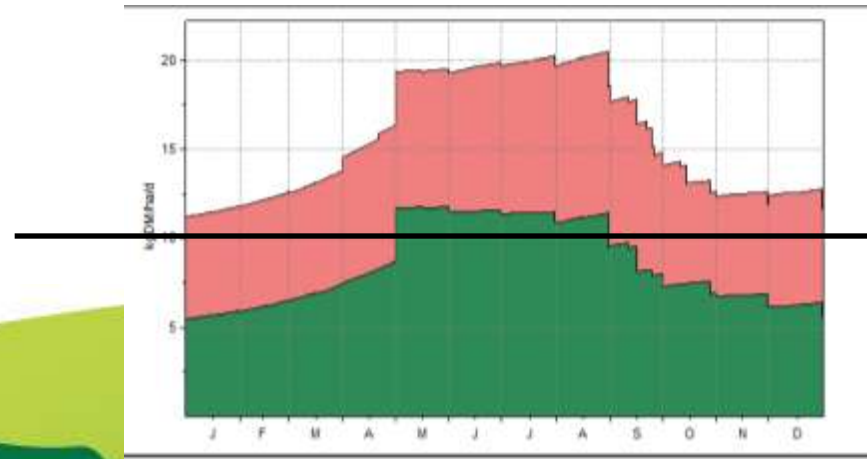
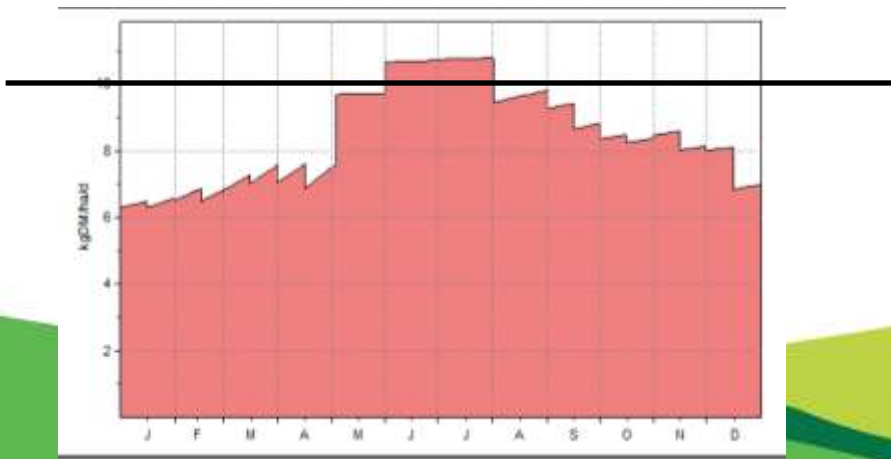
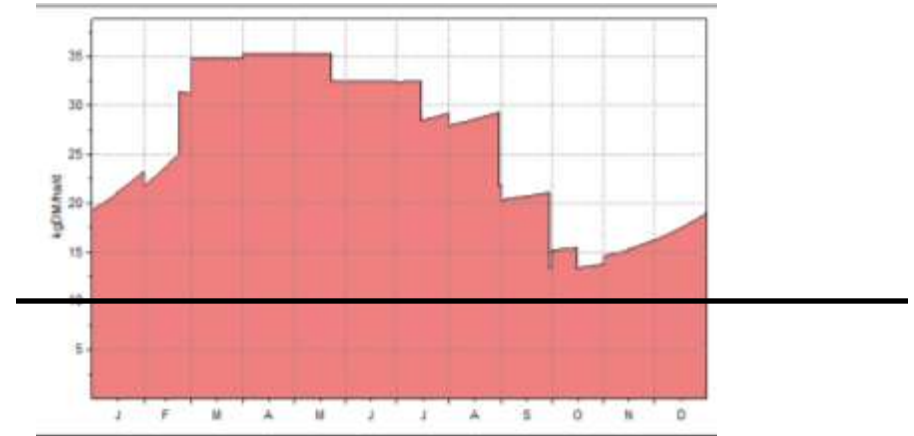


- Being used here since 2011
- How used is NZ
 - Elite farmers (top 5%)
 - With consultants
 - Monitoring
 - System analysis
 - Reliant on good data

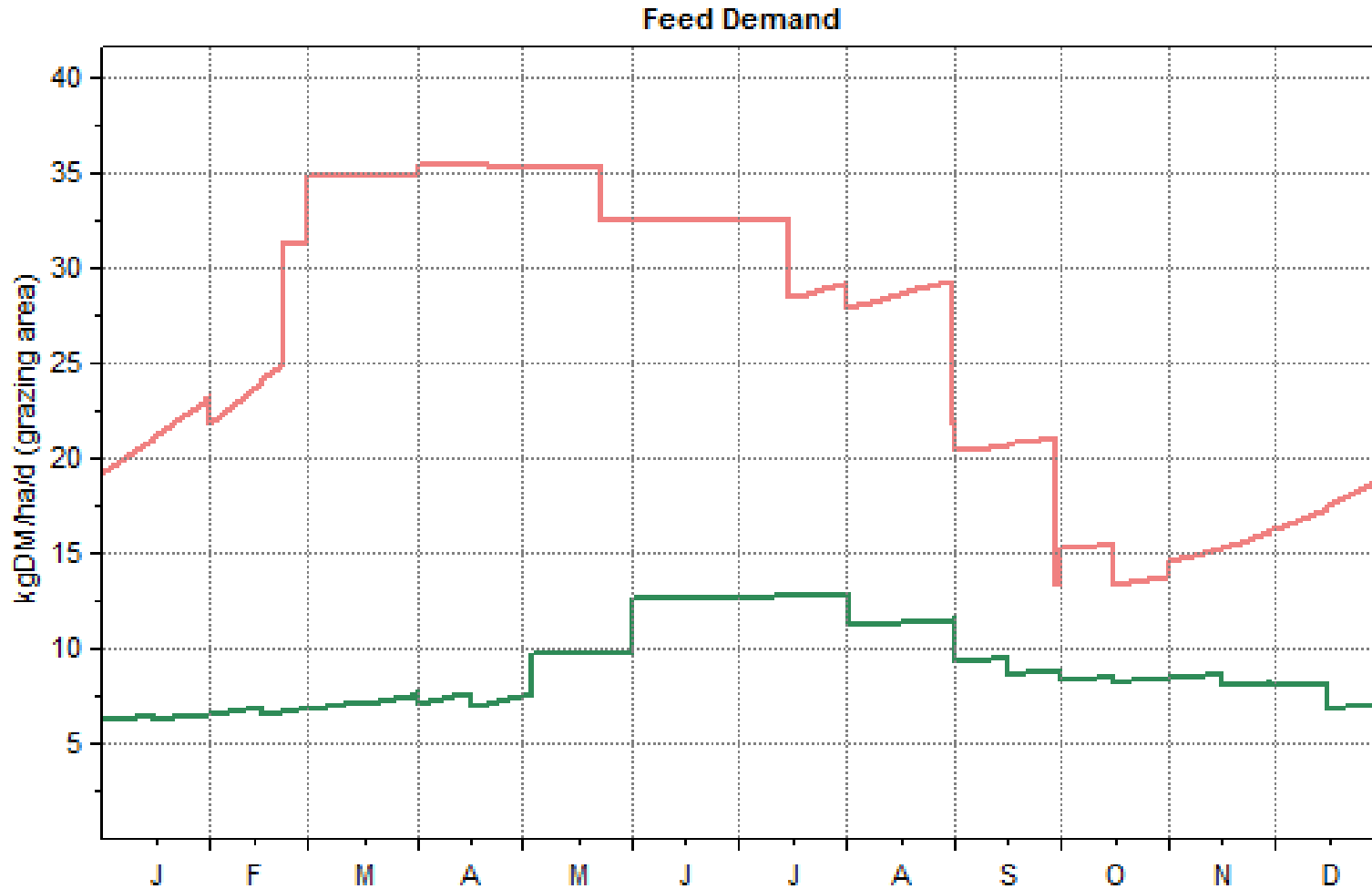




More than one way to skin a cat

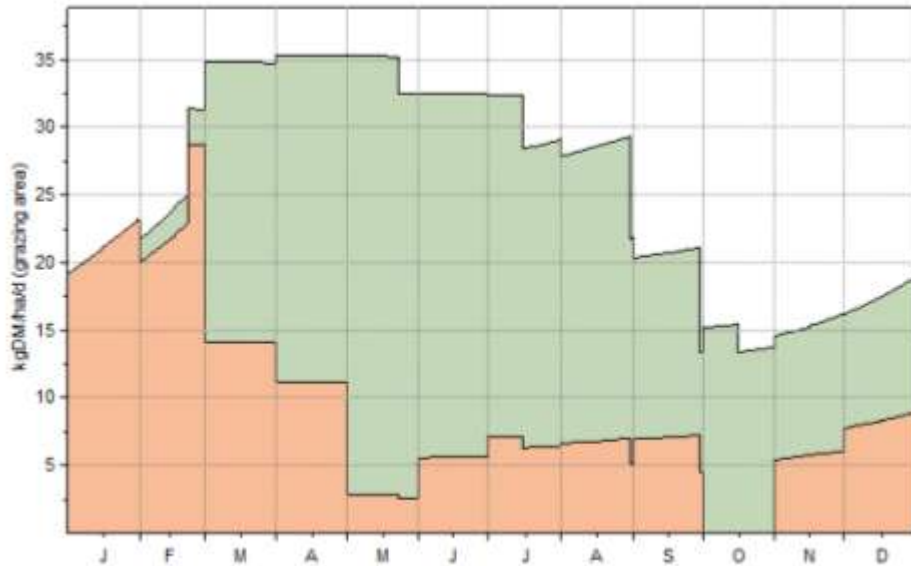


Tale of two systems

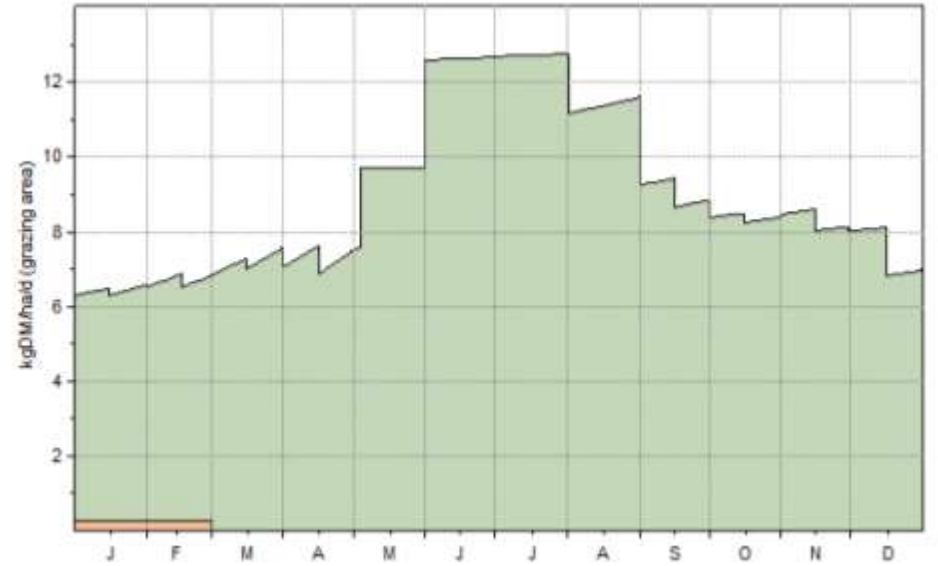




Tale of two systems

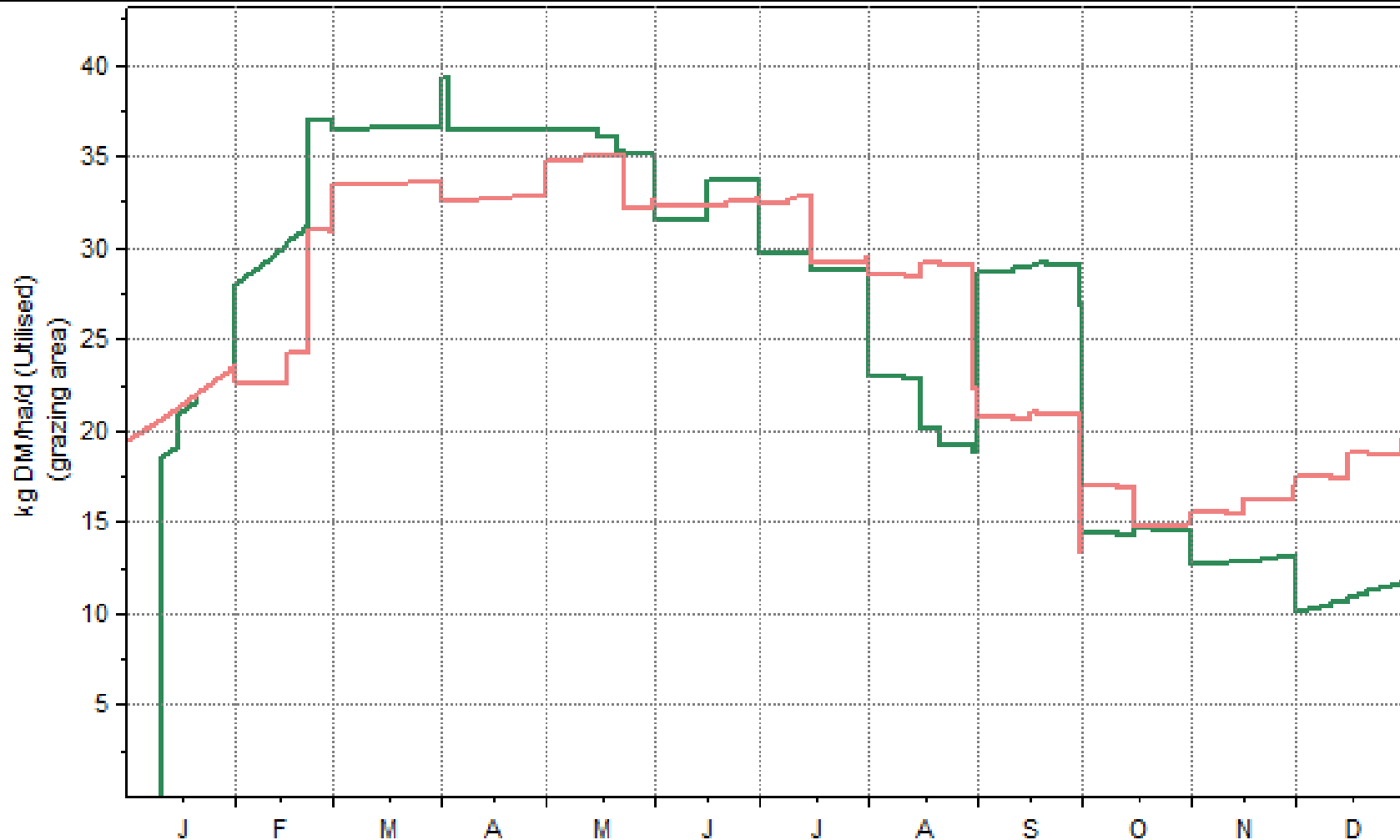


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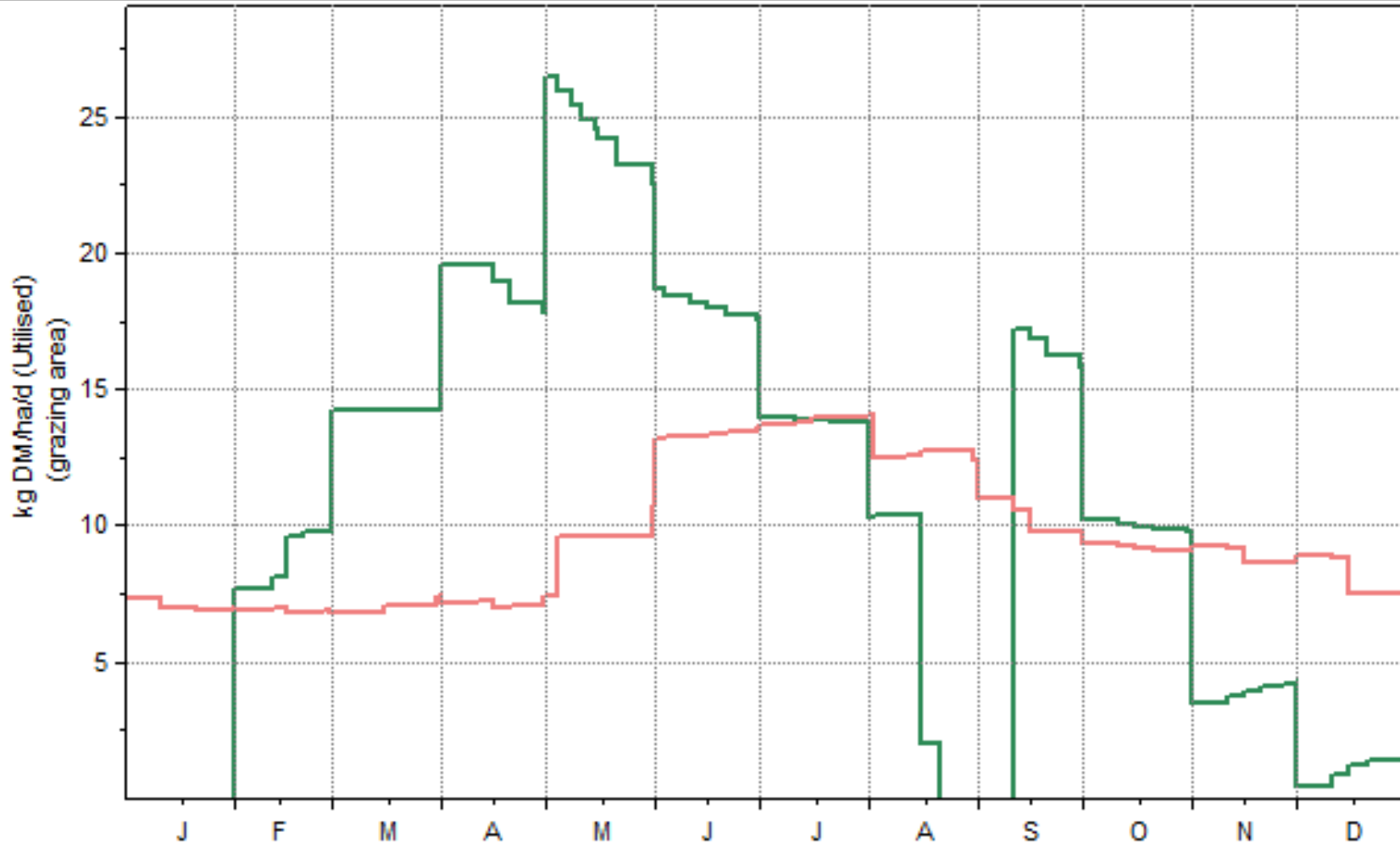


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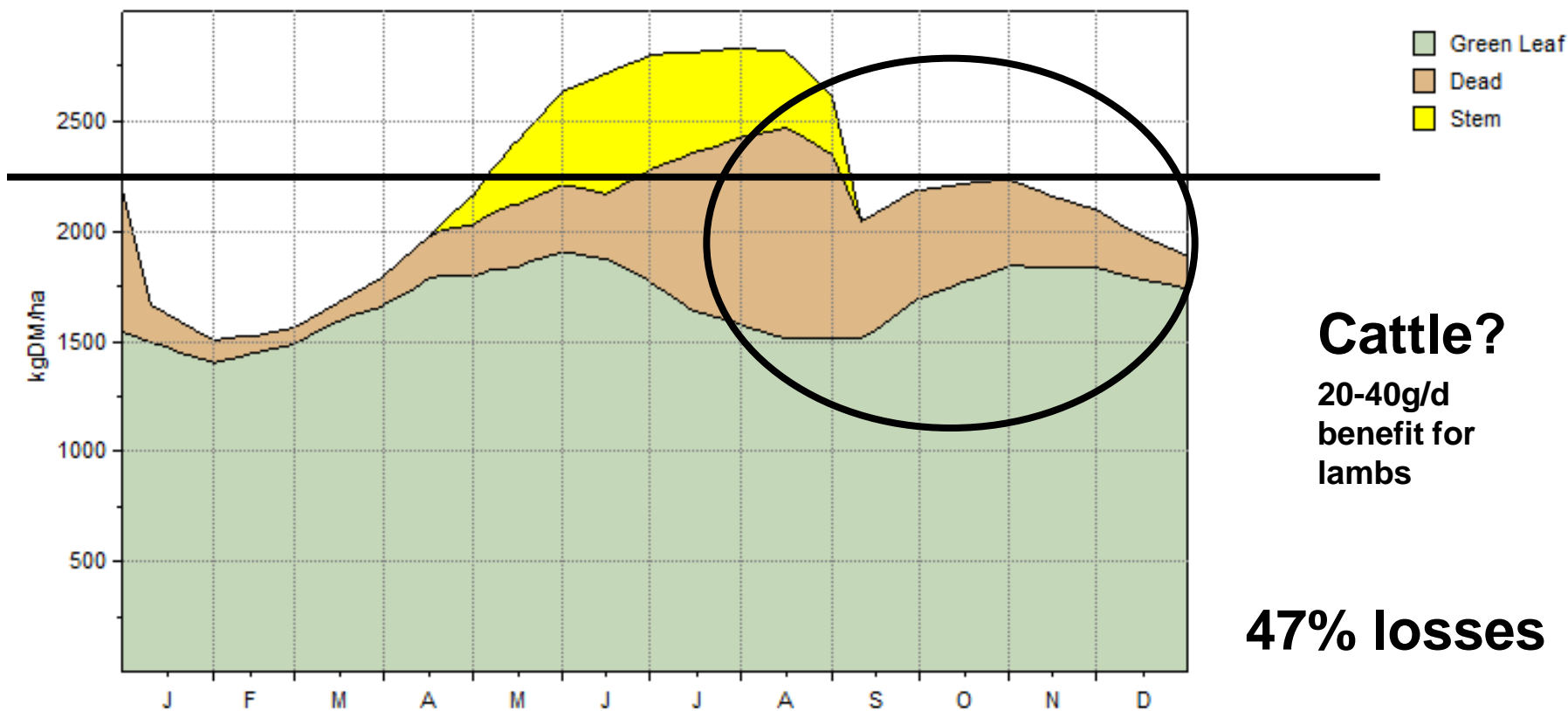
Supply vs demand



Supply vs demand



Pasture quality



Cattle?

20-40g/d
benefit for
lambs

47% losses



Learnings

- Takes at least two grazing seasons
- Need an epiphany moment
- Need to move towards kg DM per ha
- Need support



Data based on NZ assumptions.
Source: AgResearch and Farmax, NZ.

cm	Athens kg DM per ha	Water kg DM per ha
15	4310	3050
14	3970	2890
13	3720	2730
12	3480	2580
11	3240	2420
10	3000	2260
9	2750	2100
8	2510	1940
7	2270	1780
6	2020	1620
5	1780	1460
4	1540	1300
3	1290	1140
2	1050	990
1	810	830

- Use weekly to monitor sward heights
- Walk each field in a "W" pattern
 - Take 40 leaf-top readings per field (ignore stems, flowers & weeds)
 - Avoid unrepresentative areas (e.g. gateways)
 - Calculate field averages and record
 - Collect data for seasonal and year-on-year assessment





Think leaf



Optimal Quality

>11.5 MJ



Moderate Quality

10.5 MJ



Poor Quality

<8 MJ



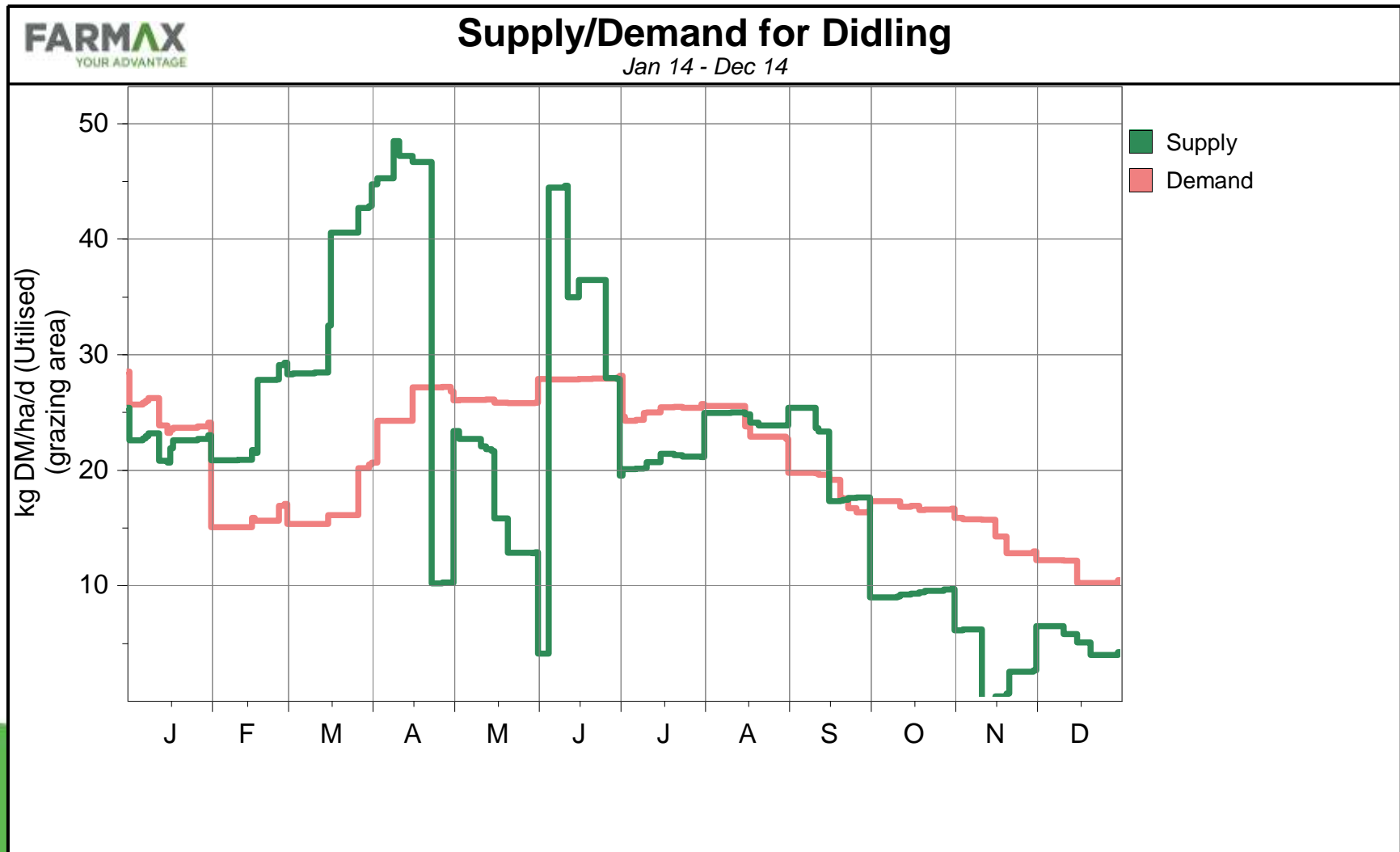


Challenges



- Cost-effectiveness of rotational grazing?
- What should my stocking rate be?
- How to integrate it into what I am currently do?

Challenges





Challenges



- Grass growth data
- Reduction of area in environmental schemes
- Genetics vs grass

11%
sometimes
measured
swards



Knowledge Partnership



- EBLEX activity
 - Involving producers, consultants and researchers
- Getting better data and understanding of the impact of changes



Summary



- The value of measuring grass
 - Part of system evaluation
- Think social norm
 - How to get those 11% to measure grass more often?
 - Develop a support network