

Rank-Grass Intervention Flowchart

(For Big Pasture, L Pastures, and similar zones)

1. Monitor Forage Stage

- Boot to early seedhead → Keep sheep in normal rotation.
- Full seedhead, stems stiff → Palatability to sheep drops → Trigger horse intervention check.

2. Check for These Conditions

- ✓ Grass canopy closing in
- ✓ Sheep starting to bunch in preferred forage spots
- ✓ Clover/forb grazing high, grass mostly untouched
- ✓ Lower stems forming thatch

If ≥ 2 are true → Move to Step 3

3. Prep for Horse Pass

- Combine pods (if space allows) for easier movement & even coverage.
- Place water/salt/minerals to draw horses into underused zones.
- Avoid wet soils to reduce pugging risk.

4. Horse Pass Parameters

- Density: High enough for active movement but not overcrowding.
- Duration:
 - Light knockdown goal → 30–60 min
 - Heavy thatch breakup goal → Up to 2 hrs
- Indicators to Pull Horses:
 - Standing grass ~50% laid over
 - Hoof press marks visible in thatch
 - Minimal removal of green regrowth

5. Rest & Recovery

- Rest until green regrowth reaches 6–8" (usually 10–14 days in your moisture conditions).
- Observe for:
 - Increased sheep access to new shoots
 - Evenness of regrowth across pasture

6. Follow-Up Graze (Sheep or Sheep + Alpacas)

- Timing: Once regrowth is tender & evenly available.
- Goal: Clip new shoots, prevent re-maturity before frost.

7. Seasonal Wrap-Up

- Avoid horse passes in late fall unless aiming for post-frost cleanup — sheep prefer fresh growth then, not trampled stems.
- Document each pass for next season's timing improvements.