

# GUIDELINE



## Control Plan Grazing Certificate part A

## Introduction

The Meadow Milk logo guarantees that the product is made from meadow milk. Meadow milk is milk from farms where the cows graze in pastures from spring to autumn for at least 120 days a year and for at least 6 hours a day. The milk is collected separately and processed into fresh dairy products – such as milk, buttermilk, custard and yoghurt –, cheese and other dairy products. The Grazing Foundation safeguards the production process, transportation and processing of the meadow milk into the final meadow dairy product.

The Meadow Milk logo was introduced in 2007 to encourage the grazing of cows in the Netherlands and to make products prepared from meadow milk easily identifiable. The logo was transferred to the Grazing Foundation in 2012. Since then, all dairy companies and food retailers have been able to use the Meadow Milk logo. In 2016 the Meadow Milk logo also became available for use on dairy products manufactured outside the Netherlands. The same requirements apply to these products. The Meadow Milk logo is available in several languages.



As the owner of the Meadow Milk logo, the Grazing Foundation lays down the requirements for certification and use of the Meadow Milk logo. In order to use the Meadow Milk logo, dairy products must satisfy the following requirements:

- The product is a dairy product or a product of which at least 10% of the dry matter consists of dairy ingredients and is intended for human consumption.
- Throughout the production chain, the producers have worked in accordance with the requirements for grazing and meadow dairy products laid down by the Grazing Foundation, as demonstrated by the fact that every link in the production chain holds a valid Grazing Certificate. In short, this means that:
  - o The cows which supply the milk are able to graze in accordance with the Grazing Foundation's requirements; and
  - o The milk is stored, transported, processed, treated and packed separately from standard dairy products.
- The brand owner for the product has concluded a Licence Agreement with the foundation.

This document provides guidelines for the control plan Grazing Certificate part A. (Prospective) certificate holders can use it to establish their control plan. The CB decides whether the Control Plan can be approved. Use of the guidelines does not guarantee this. For more information see the Manual for certification of Meadow Dairy Products and licensing of the Meadow Milk logo.

Include an explanation of each component where possible and relevant explaining:

- Which department, or person, is responsible
- How information provision and other internal and external communication is organised
- Which procedures, documents and forms apply
- How and who ensures that procedures are up-to-date and in compliance with the conditions of the Grazing Foundation

*This guideline is based on the legal documents that enter into force on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020. If there are any discrepancies (including those of interpretation), the text of the legal documents will take precedence.*

## 1 Policy

Describe the policy with regard to meadow dairy and grazing. Describe how dairy farmers are supported and encouraged to practise grazing, if applicable.

## 2 Definitions

Include an explanation of the relevant terms that are used in the control plan. The explanations must be consistent with the foundation's definitions. If certain options are permitted by the foundation but not by your company, state this here (for instance, flexible implementation of grazing by means of registration using a measurement system). For example:

**Grazing:** in the normal course of business, all eligible lactating cows are allowed to graze outdoors in a meadow with sufficient grass for at least six hours a day and at least 120 days a year, so that the animals are free to exercise their natural grazing habits on a continual basis.

**Flexible implementation of grazing:** in the normal course of business, dairy farms allow all eligible lactating cows to graze outdoors in a meadow with sufficient grass for at least 720 hours and at least 120 days a year, so that the animals are free to exercise their natural grazing habits on a continual basis.

**Declaration of Intent:** a document signed by the dairy farmer in which he declares his intent to allow his cows to graze in accordance with the Grazing Regulations of [name of company] during the year when the declaration is made.

**Grazing regulations:** the requirements laid down by [name of company], in addition to the general terms and conditions of supply, which must be satisfied in order to be eligible to supply Meadow Farm Milk to [name of company]. These requirements were laid down on [date] and may be found [here].

**Meadow Farm Milk:** raw farm milk produced by a dairy farmer who practises grazing and which is intended for processing into dairy products for human consumption.

**Herd grazing:** a form of grazing in which all eligible lactating cows graze on a grazing day, but not at the same time as a single herd.

**Partial herd grazing:** a situation in which some of the eligible lactating cows do not graze during a grazing day.

**Grazable area:** the total area of a group of plots that can be accessed in the normal course of business by lactating cows and is used to allow lactating cows to graze. If a crop other than grass is growing in these plots, that plot will not be considered to form part of the grazeable area.

## 3 Scope and purpose

Describe the scope and purpose of the control plan. For example:

- Description of the control system which safeguards that the dairy farmers who supply meadow farm milk and practise grazing do so in accordance with the Grazing Foundation's requirements.
- Description of the procedures which safeguard that milk transporters collect meadow farm milk separately from standard farm milk.

Describe the purpose of the control plan. For example:

- To verifiably safeguard that dairy milk farmers who supply meadow dairy milk allow their cows to graze in accordance with the Grazing Foundation's requirements.
- To verifiably safeguard that milk transporters collect meadow farm milk separately from standard farm milk.

- To make it possible to assess with maximum transparency whether dairy farmers who supply meadow dairy milk practise grazing correctly, in a manner which complies with the Grazing Foundation's requirements.

#### **4 Registration/Declaration of Intent**

Describe the procedure by which dairy farmers can register as a supplier of meadow farm milk. In general, a so-called declaration of intent is used here.

- The dairy farmer must state of his intention to practise grazing in advance. The declaration of intent (see Appendix 1 for an example) must be submitted by a latest date specified by the certificate holder, which cannot be later than 15 June. This date should ideally be a month earlier.
- By submitting the declaration of intent, the dairy farmer undertakes to adhere to the Grazing Regulations of the certificate holder (see Appendix 2).
- The declaration of intent must clearly indicate the type of grazing chosen by the dairy farmer.
- If the dairy farmer intends to use a measurement system, a provision is included in the declaration of intent to whereby the dairy farmer authorises the certificate holder to retrieve relevant data from the central register.
- The declaration of intent is valid until the latest date specified by the certificate holder in the following year. The declaration of intent may be withdrawn earlier by the both the certificate holder or the dairy farmer. As soon as the dairy farmer stops grazing, he must notify the certificate holder.
- The certificate holder can immediately remove a dairy farmer from the list of meadow farm milk suppliers if, for example, any inspection finds that the grazing does not satisfy the requirements and/or the dairy farmer does not provide full cooperation and/or the dairy farmer himself states that he does not satisfy the requirements.
- The burden of proving that grazing is practised on his farm lies with the dairy farmer.

#### **5 Register of Affiliated Dairy Farmers**

The certificate holder must have a register where data relating to dairy farmers who supply meadow farm milk. This register must be retained for two years. If meadow farm milk is purchased from other farms, which must also have a valid certificate, this must also be recorded in the register.

The following information about every dairy farmer who supplies meadow farm milk must be available and up to date:

- Name and address data
- Date when the farmer started to supply meadow farm milk
- Chosen type of grazing
- Monthly volume of meadow farm milk supplied
- Inspections performed during the last two years: type of inspection, inspector, inspection form and outcome
- Planned inspections in the next two years
- Measures and/or penalties imposed

It is also recommended that the register should record the following information for each dairy farmer who supplies meadow farm milk (if the information is used to determine whether the grazing requirements are satisfied, this must also be retained for two years):

- A copy of the declaration of intent
- If applicable: manufacturer of the measurement system and date of installation
- (Expected) first day of grazing and (expected) last day of grazing
- (Expected) number of hours of grazing per grazing day
- Number of cattle, including dairy cows, young stock, dry cows and other cattle
- Total land area, including the total area of grassland and the total grazeable area (if possible, documentation indicating the grazeable area)
- Number of lactating cows per hectare of grazeable area
- Milking system (conventional or AMS)

## **6 Facilities for registering grazing 120/720**

If the certificate holder permits dairy farmers to practise grazing 120/720, the certificate holder must provide a central grazing calendar.

This calendar must enable the dairy farmer to:

- Log in to a personal account in a secure environment
- In this personal account he can view relevant grazing-related information for his farm and add information/make changes
- The dairy farmer must be able to enter the start time and end time of grazing for each day in advance.
- The dairy farmer must be able to ensure that the calendar is up to date at all times; he may make changes to the calendar up to a maximum of seven days in the past.
- During the grazing season the dairy farmer must be able to view his records in order to determine whether he is likely to achieve his minimum of 120 grazing days and minimum of 720 grazing hours.
- Recording the plots which are grazed is optional.
- Registration in the calendar must be accessible to the certificate holder and the CB who performs the audit.

## **7 Facilities for measurement system**

If the certificate holder permits dairy farmers to register grazing with a measurement system, the certificate holder must have established procedures which enable it to form an opinion based on the data from the measurement system. These include:

- Obtaining authorisation from dairy farmers who use this option, so that the certificate holder can retrieve the dairy farmer's records
- Procedures for retrieving and processing the daily reports from dairy farmers who use this option

## 8 Inspections

Describe the procedure for carrying out and assessing inspections. A Guideline for performing inspections on dairy farms and reporting is available at [www.weidemelk.nl](http://www.weidemelk.nl).

### ***Number, selection and planning***

- A minimum number of inspections of dairy farmers must be performed annually:
  - a) Minimum of 10%: unannounced and selective based on a risk assessment, performed by an accredited CB;
  - b) Minimum of 15%: performed by an accredited CB;
  - c) Minimum of 15%: performed by the certificate holder or an accredited CB.
- The inspections under a) may not be combined with inspections at the dairy farm that are announced. These inspections must take place at a time when the cows actually graze. With a digital grazing calendar that can be read centrally, inspections can be carried out more efficiently, because the CB can then take the grazing times of the dairy farmer into account in the planning.
- The inspections under b) and c) may come from a random sampling and may be announced.
- Inspections must be performed during the grazing season. On dairy farms that practice grazing 120/720 the inspection must be planned at a moment that the cows are being grazed.
- The certificate holder will send the list of participating dairy farms and/or the selection to the CB as early as possible in the year; the CB then receives a monthly update of this list. This makes it possible to plan the inspections in plenty of time and to visit high-risk farms early in the season.
- Indicators for the risk assessment include:
  - Late start date for grazing
  - Assessed as 'doubts' during previous inspections
  - New member
  - Start-up grazer
  - Night grazing
  - High number of cows per hectare of grazeable area
  - Approach to entering information into the central calendar (in previous year)
  - Large herd
  - Automatic milking system
  - Information from the Grazing Indicator of Qlip

### ***Implementation, reporting and follow-up***

- Inspections are carried out using ten inspection points, subdivided into four themes: grazing registration, grass availability, grazing infrastructure and grazing signals, and grazing practice during inspection (see **Fout! Verwijzingsbron niet gevonden.**)
- An inspection report is produced after every inspection and is retained by the certificate holder for at least two years.



- The CB also sends the inspection reports relating to unannounced inspections to the Grazing Foundation in accordance with the agreements made in this regard.
- The performance and reporting of inspections performed by certificate holders must be in compliance with the requirements of the foundation.
- The inspector answers each inspection point with 'yes', 'no' or 'not applicable' and substantiates the answer. The conclusion is based on the results. In addition to 'approve' and 'not approve', the conclusion of the inspection may also be 'doubt' or 'incomplete'. The foundation has laid down guidelines for determining the provisional inspection conclusion:
  - Approve
    - All questions are answered with a 'yes'
    - For inspections that do not fall under the unannounced, selectively carried out inspections or under follow-up inspections, it also applies that if the questions under 4 have not been answered with 'yes', it is possible on the basis of the other observations and with clear substantiation that an 'approve' is concluded.
  - Incomplete
    - If grazing registration is not available at the time of inspection (but registration was present – e.g. the farmer was unable to start up the PC).
    - If at announced inspections and with follow-up inspections: the cows were not grazing because the inspection took place outside grazing block times.
  - Doubt or Not approved
    - If the criteria for 'approve' or 'incomplete' are not met.
  - Observations that in any case will result in a conclusion 'not approved' are:
    - Dairy farmer does not keep a grazing registration at all
    - Dairy farmer started grazing on June 16 or later.
    - Dairy farmer applies regular grazing (120/6), but the dairy farmer does not structurally graze all lactating dairy cows at least 6 hours a day.
    - Dairy farmer applies herd grazing for the eligible lactating cows, but does not apply flexible implementation of grazing using a measurement system.
    - Dairy farmer applies partial herd grazing for the eligible lactating cows.
    - There are more than 10 lactating cows per hectare grazeable area
    - There is no grazing infrastructure and there are no grazing signals ('no' on all questions under theme grazing infrastructure and grazing signals)
- When the conclusion of the inspection is 'not approve', the dairy farmer concerned may no longer supply meadow farm milk. When the conclusion of the inspection is 'doubt', the inspector will re-inspect the farm to assess the grazing practice (follow-up inspection). When the conclusion of the inspection is 'incomplete' the inspector will return to complete the inspection at a later date (follow-up inspection).
- Follow-up inspections are always performed by a CB and are unannounced. As a rule, follow-up inspection is performed within seven weeks after the certificate holder has received the inspector's conclusion. If the conclusion 'doubt' is reached again after follow-up inspection where the initial conclusion was 'doubt', the dairy farmer concerned may no longer supply meadow farm milk.

- The dairy farmer is informed of the provisional conclusion verbally during the inspection, with an explanation. A reviewer will reach the final conclusion based on the provisional conclusion, the inspection report and any follow-up inspection. The dairy farmer is informed of the final conclusion in writing.

## **9 Other inspections**

In addition to inspections, the certificate holder can also check in other ways whether there is a reasonable guarantee that a dairy farmer who supplies meadow farm milk actually practises grazing. An example is checking during and after the end of the grazing season whether the grazing registration has been completed correctly and whether this indicates that the required number of grazing days and hours has been or will be reached.

## **10 Penalties**

The certificate holder must impose a penalty on dairy farmers who do not practise grazing but who are registered as a Meadow Farm Milk supplier (unless this is due to an administrative error on the part of the certificate holder).

## **11 Provision of information to the milk transporters**

Indicate the safeguards that ensure that milk transporters who collect meadow farm milk only collect from dairy farmers who practise grazing and are registered as such.

- An up-to-date list of participating dairy farmers is sent to [the milk transporter(s)] each [week/month]. Collection is planned on the basis of this list.

## **12 Provision of information to the CB**

The certificate holder is obliged to notify any relevant changes to the CB in writing within a reasonable period and must have implemented a procedure for doing so.

## **13 Risk analysis**

The certificate holder must conduct a risk analysis concerning the risk of mixing Meadow Farm Milk with other farm milk. As part of this analysis, the critical points must be identified and a risk mitigation plan for these critical points must be drawn up and implemented.



## Appendix 1. Declaration of Intent Grazing (20xx)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Farmno: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Hereafter "Participant":

Declares

1. In [20xx] the Participant will practise grazing in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Grazing Regulations of [name of certificate holder]. The Participant will practise the following Grazing option
  - Grazing (120/6)
  - Flexible grazing (120/720), whereby the Participant will record the number of grazing days and hours promptly and accurately on a central online calendar
  - Flexible grazing (120/720), whereby the number of grazing days and hours is registered by means of a measurement system for recording of individual cow grazing time which is approved by the Grazing Foundation. The measurement system is manufactured by \_\_\_\_\_ and was installed on the Participant's dairy farm and declared ready for use by the manufacturer on \_\_\_\_\_
2. During the Grazing period the Participant will maintain a register in accordance with the requirements laid down in the Grazing Regulations of [name of certificate holder]. This register must be made available in full at any time at the request of [name of certificate holder] or of any organisation which is responsible for supervising the practising of Grazing on behalf of [name of certificate holder].
3. The Grazing register must be retained until the end of the calendar year [one/two years] following the year when Grazing is practised.
4. The Participant acknowledges that compliance with Grazing will be supervised at the direction or on behalf of [name of certificate holder] and agrees to provide full cooperation. If any inspection finds that the Grazing does not satisfy the requirements and/or the Participant does not provide full cooperation and/or the Participant himself states that he does not satisfy the requirements, [name of certificate holder] may immediately declare this Declaration of Intent null and void.
5. If the Flexible Grazing (120/720) option has been selected, whereby the number of grazing days and hours is registered by means of a measurement system for recording of individual cow grazing time which is approved by the Grazing Foundation, the Participant authorises [name of certificate holder] to retrieve relevant data from the central register.
6. The Participant will inform [name of certificate holder] immediately in writing if he stops Grazing.

Signed in agreement,

Name\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature

[Name of certificate holder] must receive a full and correctly completed Declaration of Intent not later than [latest date specified by the certificate holder, not later than 15 June]. This Declaration of Intent is valid until [latest date specified by the certificate holder, not later than 15 June] in the following year.

\* The signatory must be authorised to represent the above-named dairy farm

## Appendix 2. Grazing Regulations

The certificate holder must ensure that the Grazing Regulations are up to date and in line with the Grazing Foundation's requirements. The certificate holder must ensure that the dairy farmer is informed of the content of the Grazing Regulations before he signs his Declaration of Intent and that he has access to these Regulations while his Declaration of Intent is valid.

The Grazing Regulations set out the requirements which must be adhered to by dairy farmers who supply Meadow Farm Milk (or their management). The table below sets out the requirements for each type of Grazing which must in all cases be included in the Grazing Regulations.

Grazing 120/6	Grazing 120/720	Grazing with measurement system
The dairy farmer informs the certificate holder of his choice of grazing method.		
All eligible lactating cows are allowed to graze outdoors in a meadow with sufficient grass for at least six hours a day and at least 120 days a year, so that the animals are free to exercise their natural grazing habits on a continual basis.	All eligible lactating cows are allowed to graze outdoors in a meadow with sufficient grass for at least 720 hours and at least 120 days a year, so that the animals are free to exercise their natural grazing habits on a continual basis.	
All lactating cows eligible for grazing must be allowed to graze at the same time. Herd grazing and partial herd grazing are not permitted		Herd grazing is permitted Partial herd grazing is not permitted
All lactating cows eligible for grazing means; all lactating cows with the exception of lactating cows in the first 14 days of lactation and lactating cows who are sick.		
There must be sufficient grass in the meadow to enable the cows to exercise their natural grazing habits on a continual basis.		
The maximum number of lactating cows per hectare of plot contiguous to the farmhouse is ten (or: at least 0.1 hectare of plot contiguous to the farmhouse is available per lactating cow).		
Grazing must start no later than 15 June of the year concerned.		
During the grazing season, records are kept that register the start and end times of grazing per grazing day. This registration must be current and accurate.		
Grazing registration may be recorded in an own system.	Grazing registration is recorded in a central registration system of the certificate holder.	Grazing registration is recorded using an approved measurement system for registration of individual cow grazing time
In the period between the start and end time of grazing, all lactating cows eligible for grazing are in the meadow. The following exception applies on farms that use an automatic milking system: all lactating cows eligible for grazing have meadow access and during the inspection no more than 25% of the cows is in the barn.		During grazing, all lactating cows eligible for grazing must have meadow access, cows may have access to the barn.

### **Criteria for flexible implementation of grazing**

To cater for dairy farmers who need more flexibility when grazing, there is an alternative to grazing 120/6, namely grazing 120/720. In addition, dairy farmers can opt for using a measurement system for registration of individual cow grazing time

#### *Additional conditions for grazing 120/720*

- Prior to the grazing season, the dairy farmer informs the dairy company that he wishes to use this option.
- The dairy farmer uses a central registration system of the certificate holder in which the dairy farmer enters the start time and end time of grazing for each day
- Registration shows that the dairy farmer allows all eligible lactating cows to graze outdoors for at least 720 hours and at least 120 days a year.
- The CB consults the central registration system so that the inspection can be planned at a time when the cows are grazing.

#### *Additional conditions for measurement system*

- Prior to the grazing season, the dairy farmer informs the dairy company that he wishes to use this option.
- The dairy farmer uses an individual cow measurement system for grazing times approved by the Grazing Foundation. An overview of approved measurement systems has been published on the website [www.weidemelk.nl](http://www.weidemelk.nl).
- Registration shows that the dairy farmer allows all eligible lactating cows to graze outdoors for at least 720 hours and at least 120 days a year.
- During an inspection, the dairy farmer provides the inspector, on request, with insight into the operation of and measurements recorded by the measurement system.
- The individual grazing time per cow per day is measured by the measurement system. This data is used to calculate whether a farm meets the conditions for grazing. The calculation is arrived at as follows:
  - o The individual grazing time of all lactating cows is included. Cows in the first 14 days of lactation are not included. The individual grazing time per cow is measured per day.
  - o If at least 90% of the cows has grazed for more than an hour, that day counts as a grazing day. If the percentage is less 90%, that day does not count as a grazing day. At least 120 grazing days must have been reached per year.
  - o For a grazing day, the average grazing time is then calculated over the individual grazing times of all lactating cows on the farm for that day (except for cows in the first 14 days of lactation).
- A report is made available to the certificate holder for each day. The report contains relevant information about the grazing time applicable on the farm for that day and cumulatively up to the day of the report.

## Appendix 3. **Assessment criteria for Inspections of Affiliated Dairy Farmers**

### 1. Grazing registration

- 1a. Has the registration been duly completed? (for each grazing day start and end time of grazing recorded, maximum of 7 days missing and reflecting the actual grazing regime of the farmer)
- 1b. Does the registration show that grazing was started no later than June 15 of the current year?
- 1c.\* *With 120/6:*  
Does the registration show that a minimum of 6 hours of grazing is done on grazing days and that achieving grazing for at least 6 hours a day and at least 120 days is feasible during the current year?

*With 120/720:*

Does the registration show that achieving grazing for at least 720 hours and at least 120 days is feasible during the current year?

\* not applicable for farmers using a measurement system

### 2. Grass availability

- 2a. Is the number of eligible lactating cows per hectare grazeable area  $\leq 10$ ?
- 2b. Do the eligible lactating cows have sufficient supply of grass, allowing them to exercise their natural grazing habits on a continuing basis?

### 3. Grazing infrastructure and grazing signals

- 3a. Are the grazing areas fenced off and using materials that are suited for dairy cattle?
- 3b. Do the grazing areas look as if they are being grazed and does the image in the field correspond with the registration?
- 3c. Is it apparent that the path or route from / to the meadow is being used?

### 4. Grazing practice during Inspection

- 4a. Is the Inspection performed during a time when cows should be grazing?
- 4b. Are all the eligible lactating cows in the meadow?

*Exception for AMS:*

Are at least 75% of the eligible lactating cows in the meadow?

*Exception for measurement system:*

Do all the eligible lactating cows have access to the meadow?