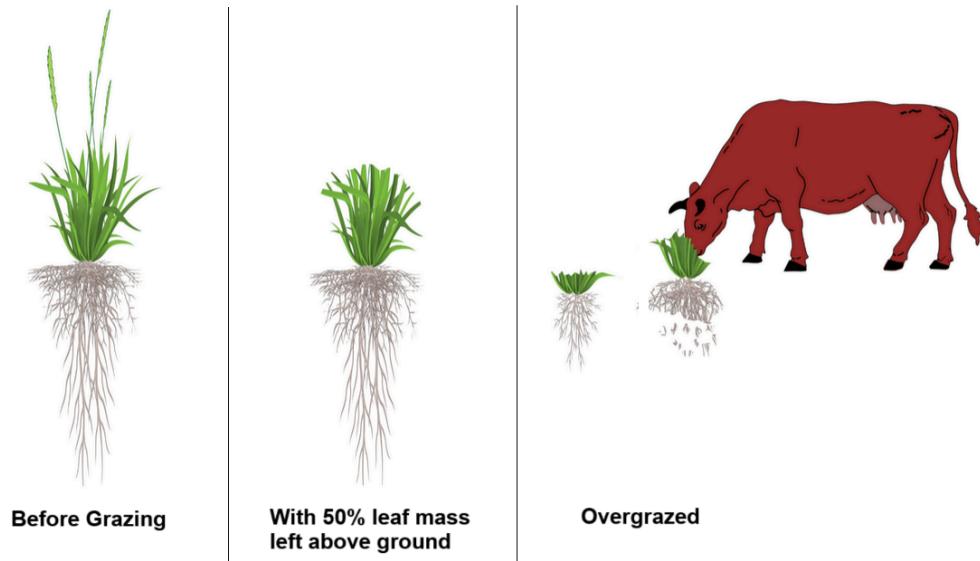


The Effects of Overgrazing Pasture

Repeatedly grazing plants without sufficient rest periods results in slower root growth below ground. If at least 50% of the leaf mass is left on a plant after grazing, then the roots will continue to grow.



If the livestock are permitted to either eat too much leaf matter from any one individual plant, or to re-graze the plant before it has time to recover properly then root growth will slow, or even stop and roots may be shed off.

The negative consequences of grazing pasture too short will be amplified when the pasture plants are stressed, for example by drought, if the soil is water-logged, or if it is compacted.

Grazing for too long or too often
Coming back to graze too soon
Grazing at the wrong time

→

Poor productivity & persistence
More unwanted weeds
Less resilience to extreme weather

Overgrazing can also lead to an increased risk of **soil erosion**. Over grazed plants reduce basal ground cover, increasing the amount of bare soil that is exposed. This means that both heavy rainfall or wind can erode the soil, resulting in nutrient loss and reductions in soil health. As such, it is important to appropriately time grazing events to ensure that the plants are not over grazed and that there is enough rest between grazing exposures to support plant recovery.

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