



HappyGrass: A new application for pasture management

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One of the main difficulties faced by all advisors and breeders when it comes to improving pasture management is the lack of objective information. Without accurate data, how can we answer these basic questions?

- What is the grass intake of cows?
- What are the forage yields of pastures?
- What is the rest time for each parcel?

Because cows graze on several parcels in 6 to 7 passes over the grazing season, calculating these values is very time-consuming without a technological tool. That's when an application like HappyGrass comes in handy!

This tool allows farmers to objectively evaluate their pasture management

with an investment of only a few minutes a week! Developed in France, this application (*available in French only*) is suited for pasture management in Quebec. Lactanet has tested the tool under Quebec conditions and is the exclusive distributor in Canada.



Testing in Quebec

To determine if the application was suited for pasture management in Quebec, Lactanet tested the tool on dairy farms for two summers. Tests conducted during the first summer aimed at determining the tool's adaptability and its relevance with advisors and a few breeders. Over the second summer, the tool was tested more in depth with a larger group of farms. To do so, 5 discussion groups on pasture management were set up in various Quebec regions. These groups were made up of 3 to 4 breeders and an advisor. They confirmed the usefulness of the application for Quebec dairy farmers.

In light of these positive results, Lactanet is now offering the application to the dairy sector and to all breeders with ruminants that graze as well as their advisors.

How does it work?

HappyGrass can be used in dairy, beef, sheep and goat farming. This online tool is connected to a mobile application and allows breeders and their advisors to enter and leverage all data on pasture management from their smart phone or computer. Advisors can access their clients' data at any time to analyze it and improve their pasture management advice.

For Quebec, the application has two modules: HappyGrass Pâturage and HappyGrass Parcelles.

1. HappyGrass Pâturage

The first module (HappyGrass Pâturage) is used to enter data directly in a digital grazing calendar. Data can be entered in the smart phone application with or without an internet connection. The data will be synchronized with the software as soon as a network is available.

All the events that occur during the grazing season can be recorded:

- Passes made by animals on various parcels
- Number of animals by category
- Forage and concentrate supplementation
- Grass measurements made with a grass meter
- Interventions made on the parcel:
 - Organic or mineral fertilization
 - Cutting uneaten grass or machine-harvesting a pasture
 - Green feeding
- Any other intervention

Quantifying grazed grass:

By knowing the number of animals grazing on each parcel as well as the amount of feed they consume in the barn, we can deduce what is ingested on pasture while taking into account what has been machine harvested. The summary section of the application shows the amount ingested on pasture by the animals and the yield of each parcel.

These automated calculations are available at any specific moment during the grazing season. With a paper calendar, this information would not be available so quickly and effortlessly. Several other reports are also available. Among other things, it is possible to visualize the rest time for each parcel and yield data for each rotation.

For more accurate estimates, measurements taken using a grass meter can be entered in the application. Thanks to grass density data from a grass meter calibration project conducted in Quebec (which is included in the application), the amount of grass available can be displayed. With this information, you can plan future rotations to avoid a grass surplus or shortage. The main goal of this module is to make the most of the grass available and to graze animals at the optimum stage.

2. HappyGrass Parcels

The second module (HappyGrass Parcels) is a mapping tool that allows you to design your grazing plan and organize its development.

The application calculates the area of each parcel. You can also add various features to the plan:

- Access lanes
- Permanent and temporary fences
- Doors to each parcel
- Watering system layout (pipes and troughs)

The application calculates the length of fence and piping required. The total cost of the equipment required is automatically calculated using the prices of the equipment chosen. The resulting grazing plan can be printed and used by your team to plan day-to-day herd movements. In addition, a detailed budget can be generated.



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