

**DARTMOOR MOORLAND
CONDITION REPORT
JANUARY 1999**

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FRCA



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1. **PETER TAVY GREAT COMMON**

Unsuitable Supplementary Feeding

Large numbers of stock are currently being outwintered and fed on this common. During a recent visit (13/1/99) an estimated 300 + cattle were present in two distinct groups, together with approximately 100 ponies, numerous sheep were also present. Moderate localised damage is starting to occur on the southern slopes of White Tor, and the northern slopes of Cox Tor. This area requires frequent monitoring.

Overgrazing

The Stage 1 Survey requested at the overgrazing meeting 1.7.98 has not been carried out to date, due to re-prioritising cases to match resource availability. However, this common continues to be routinely monitored and would still be considered significantly overgrazed on a visual basis. A stage 1 type survey would still be appropriate on this area. Comments made locally suggest that stock numbers may once again be increasing on this common.

2. **MARY TAVY COMMON**

Unsuitable Supplementary Feeding

Feeding of approximately 60-70 Galloway type cattle is currently being carried out on the western side of Gibbett Hill. No significant physical damage appears to have been caused to date.

Overgrazing

The Stage 1 Survey requested at the previous overgrazing meeting is currently being undertaken. A full report will be produced shortly. Given the physical condition of the vegetation present, it is extremely likely that the report will recommend that a Stage 2 Survey be carried out in the Spring of 1999.

March/April ideally

3. **WALKHAMPTON COMMON/DARTMOOR FOREST (W)**

Unsuitable Supplementary Feeding

No evidence of unsuitable supplementary feeding practice has been seen to date.

cattle removed by 10.12.98

Overgrazing

The extreme south west corner of the west quarter of the Forest would be considered significantly overgrazed on a visual basis. The lack of herbage in this area is resulting in cattle and sheep continually straying onto the neighbouring Walkhampton Common in search of fodder, resulting in Walkhampton Commoners shepherding them back to the Forest on a daily basis, causing significant physical damage to occur at an unacceptable level. Preliminary meetings have been held between FRCA and the owner of the majority

of the straying stock but to date no solution has been arrived at. It currently appears as though the only course of action under cross-compliance regulations would be to argue that this small section of the forest could be considered as an individual grazing unit, and to carry out an overgrazing investigation on this area in isolation. The situation is further complicated by MOD activity.

4. **WHITCHURCH COMMON**

Unsuitable Supplementary Feeding

Previously reported under the Walkhampton Common/Great Mis Tor area - movement of cattle from the common to inbye land for feeding has historically resulted in extensive areas around the inbye walls being severely poached. Action by MAFF temporarily solved this problem, however the area is still vulnerable to damage, and requires continued monitoring.

Overgrazing

On a subjective basis the majority of this common would be considered severely overgrazed. A Stage 1 Survey would be required to confirm this assessment.

5. **UGBOROUGH/HARFORD COMMON**

Negotiations are still being held between MAFF/FRCA and graziers following completion of the Stage 2 report which confirmed that significant overgrazing was taking place. These negotiations are aimed at arriving at an agreed management plan for these commons, which if followed should halt significant overgrazing. A further Stage 2 assessment will be required this spring.

6. **CHAGFORD COMMON**

Unsuitable Supplementary Feeding

Up to 50 cattle and 30 ponies have been fed in this area this winter. To date no significantly physical damage appears to have been caused.

Overgrazing

This particular area of the common appears to be significantly overgrazed. A full walk of the entire common has not yet been undertaken.



Overgrazing

Some areas of Beardown Newtake itself and part of the Forest (W) adjacent to Holming Beam Plantation appear to be overgrazed on a visual basis. No judgement has currently been made as to the extent of these overgrazed areas. A stage 1 survey would be needed to provide a definitive answer.

14. BRENT MOOR

Unsuitable Supplementary Feeding

Supplementary feeding of over 200 head of cattle is currently taking place on this common, however it appears as though this has been relatively well managed to date, and significant physical damage has been avoided.

Overgrazing

The stage 1 survey requested at the previous meeting has not yet been carried out. It is anticipated that this will be undertaken by the end of February 1999.

15. JORDAN MANOR / NATSWORTHY

Further clarification of the exact areas to be examined has not been received to date, therefore no further action has been taken.

16. AMICOMBE HILL (WILLSWORTHY)

Unsuitable Supplementary Feeding

No signs of unsuitable supplementary feeding or other physical damage was seen during a visit to this area on 11/1/99. Further liaison with English Nature may be necessary to identify the exact location of any damage seen earlier in the year.

Overgrazing

A visual assessment of the vegetation indicates that significant overgrazing may be occurring over much of this area (part of the north section of the Forest). A stage 1 survey would be necessary in order to confirm this.

17. GIDLEIGH COMMON

This common is about to enter an ESA agreement, consequently no assessment has been made to date.

