



GrassCheck 2026–2028: Farmer Recruitment Information Pack

Why Grass Matters: Our competitive advantage

Grass is the cornerstone of profitable and sustainable livestock farming in Northern Ireland. It is the lowest-cost forage available, providing high-quality feed that underpins dairy, beef, and sheep production. With our mild, wet climate and long growing season, Northern Ireland can grow grass more efficiently and competitively than most regions in the world. By optimising grass growth and utilisation, farmers can reduce reliance on imported feed, lower production costs, and cut the farm's carbon footprint — while maintaining top animal performance.

About GrassCheck

GrassCheck aims to help Northern Ireland farmers grow and utilise more high-quality grass by demonstrating good grassland management, exchanging experiences and expertise with the wider NI agriculture industry. Measuring, recording and budgeting grass has helped assist GrassCheck farmers decision-making in terms of grassland management and therefore improving on farm sustainability.

GrassCheck is a joint initiative of AgriSearch, AFBI and CAFRE, co-funded by AgriSearch and the DAERA. AgriSearch manages the farmer network component of the project, including coordination of participating farms and stewardship of associated farmer data.



What's Involved

Participating farmers will be expected to:

- **Measure grass** weekly and recording pre- and post-grazing covers.
- **Sample grass** regularly for quality testing (bi-weekly for dairy and monthly for beef/sheep).
- **Record data** in AgriNet each week:
 - Input grass measurements
 - Stock numbers & weights
 - Diet (grass, silage, meal)
 - Fertiliser/slurry per paddock
 - Milk litres, fat & protein (for dairy farms)
- Take part in **Knowledge Exchange (KE)** and **training events**.
- Complete **annual benchmarking** (financial, physical & carbon).

Who We're Looking For

AgriSearch is seeking up to **50 farms** (half dairy, half beef/sheep) across all counties.

Applicants should have:

- Strong grassland management knowledge.
- Majority grass or grass-clover swards.
- Reasonable sized grazing block and paddock setup.
- Willingness to measure, share data, and learn.
- Commitment to KE activities and training.

Training & Support

- Work closely with AgriSearch facilitator to set and achieve individual objectives.
- Opportunity to attend up to 5 training events per year (on-farm or online).
- Annual project opening and closing meetings.
- Support from external experts and advisors.
- Opportunity to attend an annual study tour



Farmer Payments & Benefits

- Up to **£800 per year** performance-based payment:
 - £800 = $\geq 80\%$ data recorded
 - £600 = $\geq 60\%$ data recorded
 - £400 = $\geq 40\%$ data recorded
- **Additional £200** for attendance at ≥ 2 in person events
- **Additional £500** for hosting farm walk
- **Equipment & support:**
 - Platometer (if required),
 - AgriNet account (€170 value)
 - Grass sampling analysis (£36/sample)
 - Access to nearest weather station data.

How to Apply

- **Complete the following application form:**
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ND37YGX>
- **Deadline:** Friday 19 December 2025
- **Selection:** January 2026 (a farm visit may be required to supplement information provided in the application)
- The project is open to **new farmers** and **existing GrassCheck farmers**
- A webinar will be hosted by AgriSearch on 1st December at 8pm to give a greater in depth briefing on the project for those interested in applying. Webinar registration link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_yN8rRLJLT-qnlTUI8_T6Pg
- AgriSearch will be at the Winter Fair if you would like to discuss the application process in person or have any queries about the project.

Further Information

If you have any specific queries, then contact either John Morrow on 028 9244 6108 or Jason Rankin on 028 92446102.



AgriSearch (The Northern Ireland Agricultural Research and Development Council) is an independent charity, registered with the Charities Commission for Northern Ireland. AgriSearch was formed in 1997 to provide a mechanism through which beef, dairy and sheep farmers could have direct involvement in production orientated research. Funds contributed to AgriSearch are used to commission research into the improvement and development of beef, sheep and dairy farming. AgriSearch's guiding principal is to provide practical benefit for primary producers to reduce costs, improve performance, drive innovation and improve welfare. Duplication of existing R&D work is avoided, and every effort is made to get maximum leverage from complementary funding sources.

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