

1/1/2015

Scoring Burren Winterages

General Instructions & Guidelines

These instructions and guidelines are subject to regular review and revision.



Measure 1 ‘Health’ Assessment for Burren Winterage-type Pastures (Including Calcareous Grasslands, Limestone Heaths, their Mosaics with Limestone Pavement and other Species-rich Grasslands).

This ‘health’ assessment is based on the supposition that management plays a significant role in determining the ability of Burren winterage-type pastures to achieve their potential in terms of the diversity and abundance of plants present. It sets out to assess the management of each field in terms of both the actual management and the management that is needed to get it into the best condition for it to function as a species-rich limestone grassland/heath. Each individual field is assessed by answering a series of questions, the results of which are used to calculate a final health rating for the field on a scale of 1 (poor) to 10 (excellent).

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

1. Optimum Time for Carrying Out M1 Assessments

- Mid-May to early September.
- Section A assessments (grazing, litter, feed sites, natural water & bare soil) are easier to carry out early in the season (early May to mid-June) but can be carried out at any time during this period using careful observation.
- Be aware that Section B assessments of the levels of ‘bracken &/or purple moor-grass’, the presence of ‘weeds &/or agriculturally-favoured species’ and the frequency of scrub seedlings are more difficult to carry out accurately early in the season which means that problems could be missed or underestimated.

2. Picking the Assessment Route for Each Field

The aim is to get a general feel for the management and ecological ‘health’ of each field and to identify existing or potential problems that need remedial action. To do this, the assessment route should:

- Cross representative areas of the grazeable habitats present so that a good overview of the state of the field can be obtained. For example, on a winterage ensure that you cover a selection of the vegetation types present such as grassland and heath, different strengths of winterage and different terrains. Where possible, you should plan an approximate route by examining an aerial photograph.
- Target any obvious hot-spots e.g. feed sites; natural watering points (particularly springs) and areas of erosion, overgrazing or undergrazing.

3. Observation Method

The health assessment is dependent on the observational skills of the surveyor. To be successful you will need to carry out the assessment at several different scales:

- *Close-up observations*
Stopping regularly to observe the area immediately around you and beneath your feet is essential to pick up the detail needed for certain assessments e.g., parting the grass at regular intervals during your walk to estimate litter levels or checking the vegetation for weed species.
- *Broad observations*
It is essential to look around as you walk so you get a feel for the wider area and to assess the overall area e.g. to estimate the overall grazing level or the percentage cover of encroaching scrub.

Time Allocation

Make sure you allow sufficient time for carrying out the M1 assessments – they will probably take longer than you think. You will find that you complete them faster as you become more familiar with the assessment criteria and the individual farms.

On the Farm

What Type of Pasture is it?

Before carrying out the assessment you need to decide what type of pasture you are looking at. Is it:

- A typical Burren winterage-type pasture
- A modified Burren winterage-type pasture e.g. more intensively grazed i.e. year round or prolonged summer grazing
- A reclaimed Burren winterage-type pasture e.g. mechanical reclamation and/or probable fertiliser application and reseeded
- A Burren lowland pasture/meadow-type (If BLG then use guidelines and calculator developed for Burren lowland grasslands. Contact the BFCP office to arrange assessment of the field's 'Conservation value')
- A grazed turlough/wetland (Contact BFCP office – assessment will be carried out by a member of the BFCP staff as further research is needed).

Description & General Information

On the assessment sheet complete the required farm & survey details and record:

- The broad pasture types present i.e. typical Burren winterage, modified Burren winterage, meadow, other.
 - For modified Burren winterages note how it was modified in the comments box and whether all or only part has been modified. Where reclamation has taken place note whether this was by rock removal with levelling and soil spreading, application of fertiliser or in the case of the Burren lowlands, by reseeded.
- The grazing management (winter, summer etc.) and whether silage or large hay bales are fed in a feeder or fixed location.

Assessment Route

Record the approximate assessment route taken either on your field map or using a GPS as this is the approximate route you will follow each year.

Management Issues Not Covered on the M1 Assessment Sheet

In drawing up the methodology for the M1 health assessments we have attempted to cover most of the common management issues/problems that will be encountered. In order not to overcomplicate the assessment, we have not tried to cover every eventuality so the person carrying out the M1 assessment needs to recognise that the health status of the habitats on individual farms or fields may be compromised by means other than those included. In such cases (e.g. abundance of overly mature heather), the assessor should note the potential problem and contact the BFCP office so that it can be built into the scoring for that specific site.

Photographs

Consider taking photographs that are representative of the field. It is a good idea to:

- Find a permanent location from which to take the photographs – one which gives a good overview of the area and which is easily to relocate e.g. on or next to an outcropping rock.
- Take a GPS reading for the photo point and a photo of it to help to relocate it in future years.
- Take a series of overlapping photo's, noting the approximate direction of the first photo.
- The photo's should be named so as to identify them e.g. the herd number, LPIS parcel or farm code, field number, photo number and year.

M1 Score Sheet & Calculation of M1 Scores

In the field:

- Complete a separate score sheet for each field
- Circle the categories that apply

In the office:

- Enter scores into the M1 assessment calculator to calculate the health rating for the field. Also enter comments and other requested data
 - The health rating will be calculated automatically and the relevant payment class will be highlighted in yellow

- Add in additional worksheets and copy in the relevant M1 calculator as required. There should only be one field per worksheet but a file can contain as many worksheets as required. Use the field number to label the worksheets
- Save the file using the farmer's name, M1, year of assessment and initials of advisor e.g. Gallagher, Michael M1 2010 SP
- Enter the payment class (1 to 10) for each assessed field into the M1,M3 sheet in the workbook
- Email the completed M1 assessments to info@burrenlife.com along with the workbook
- Retain field sheet for crosschecking

FURTHER INFORMATION

The methodology described here is based on that developed for assessing rangeland health in Alberta and British Columbia, Canada. Details on the former can be found at <http://esrd.alberta.ca/lands-forests/grazing-range-management/range-health.aspx>.

SCORING GUIDELINES
Measure 1 ‘Health’ Assessment for Burren Winterage-type
Pastures

(Including Calcareous Grasslands, Limestone Heaths and their Mosaics with Limestone Pavement).

This document provides guidelines for scoring Burren Winterages. It should be followed as closely as possible but judgement and discretion can and should be used where necessary e.g. figures such as ‘half’ and percentages are not definitive but rather indicative.

Section A. Relating to Grazing and Stock Management

Grazing levels are rarely uniform across an area. Palatable and accessible vegetation will be grazed preferentially while less palatable species and areas may be grazed very lightly or not at all. Vegetation on ‘difficult’ but accessible, rough areas may remain ungrazed or be only lightly grazed (depending on stocking levels). **As long as grazing is adequate on the more easily accessed areas, lower grazing levels are acceptable on ‘difficult’ areas.**

The trend in grazing intensity (Upward / Downward / Stable / Unknown) should be recorded on the score sheet at the end of section A

A1. Grazing level

The aim is to evaluate whether the current grazing level is that needed to keep the grazed habitat in good ecological condition i.e. is it too high, too low or optimal. The assessment is based on the observation of a variety of indicators including the appearance of the sward, litter levels, amount of dunging and poaching. It has the potential to detect problems early e.g. before litter builds due to reduced grazing.

Scoring Notes:

- *Grazing levels should be **assessed across the main grazeable area**. ‘Difficult’ areas (i.e. very rough ground or places that are difficult for stock to get into to graze due to rough terrain) should be excluded from the assessment. Where this is the case note the presence of ‘difficult’ areas on the score sheet.*
- *Scoring of fields that are only winter grazed is best carried out at the end of, or shortly after, the winter grazing period. However, it can be carried out successfully in late spring and during the summer as long as careful observations are made at regular intervals along the assessment route.*

Negligible - Little or no grazing evident: Sward rank, barely grazed, usually taller than a well grazed winterage. Litter layer and dead-standing vegetation obvious - pasture likely to be paler than that on well grazed areas. Signs of grazing livestock absent or rarely seen i.e. dung, regular stock paths, recent hoof prints. Few flowering plants compared to a well grazed pasture.	-35
Grazing level below optimum: May be due to insufficient summer grazing on stronger winterages as well as lower than optimal winter grazing (signs similar to above but not as extensive or obvious) A. <u>Significantly below optimum</u> – grazing low across most of area. May be confined to palatable areas but even these not particularly well grazed. Less palatable areas barely grazed at all. B. <u>Less than half</u> of site <u>fairly well grazed</u> e.g. only palatable areas fairly well grazed but grazing levels elsewhere low. C. <u>More than half</u> of site <u>well grazed</u> e.g. palatable areas well grazed but rest only fairly well grazed at best. D. <u>Generally good</u> but still <u>slightly below optimum</u> in some areas.	A. -25 B. -5 C. 0 D. 9
Grazing optimum: Sward looks in good condition with an abundance of flowering plants. Litter levels low although they may be higher where grazing levels have increased only recently. Dead standing vegetation absent or very rare. Signs of grazing livestock such as dung, discernable stock paths and hoof prints relatively easy to see but not overly conspicuous i.e. easy to find but not immediately visible all the time.	15
Grazing level above optimum: Applies to winter, but more particularly summer, grazing (some signs similar to below but not as extensive or obvious) A. Grazing <u>slightly above optimum</u> but otherwise good. Applies mainly to winter grazing. B. Signs of overgrazing evident but patchy in distribution. Applies mainly to fields grazed harder than recommended in late summer/early autumn e.g. some areas grazed out rather than topped but flowering plants still obvious.	A. 9 B. -5

<p>Over grazed: Mainly applies to fields grazed throughout the year but <u>particularly late spring & summer</u>. May occasionally occur if overstocked in winter.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively few herbs or grasses seen in flower during May/June/July as grazed off. So site looks ‘grassy’ rather than ‘flowery’. Most common herbs are low growing rosette plants (e.g. daisies). • Weeds such as docks & thistles more common than on typically grazed winterages. • Litter absent or negligible, dung v. conspicuous (may be concentrated in certain areas), bare soil and disturbed stones may occur throughout the area. 	-35
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A2. Plant Litter & Rank Vegetation

Where grazing is absent or too light, dead plant material known as ‘litter’ accumulates. It may be present as a layer at the base of the sward (thatch) or as dead-standing vegetation (mainly grasses and sedges). The amount of litter will depend on the grazing level so it may be extensive or patchy. As litter levels increase, the diversity and abundance of herbs (i.e. flowers) decreases.

Scoring Notes:

- Litter levels should be **assessed across the main grazeable area**. ‘Difficult’ areas (i.e. very rough ground or places that are difficult for stock to get into to graze due to rough terrain) should be excluded from the assessment.
- Litter cover on well grazed winterage-type pastures should be less than 10%. It may take a few years for the litter levels to drop to this level on areas that were previously undergrazed.
- NB. Dead-standing plant litter can occur as the result of prolonged hot, dry weather especially where soils are very thin. Take care to distinguish between litter resulting from undergrazing and that due to climatic conditions; the latter should not influence the scoring.

Litter negligible ≤10% cover: v sparse & scattered on main grazeable area.	20
Litter cover low 11 – 25%: mostly in less palatable areas.	14
Litter cover medium >25-50%: thatch forming some continuous patches but mostly in less palatable areas.	8
Litter cover significant >50-75%: dead-standing frequent and thatch forming some continuous patches.	2
Litter dominant >75% cover: forming a more or less continuous layer across most of the assessment area both as a thatch and dead-standing, the latter particularly visible.	0

A3. Feed site Damage

Scoring Notes:

- Both current and v recent feed sites where damage is still obvious should be assessed.
- The assessment area encompasses the full area around the feed site(s) where there is damage.
- Bare earth will be visible in spring but is likely to re-vegetate over the summer so assess the site accordingly. This will mean assessing either the amount of bare earth or the relative frequency of weeds/agriculturally favoured species or a combination of both.
- The location of any inappropriately sited feed troughs/sites should be noted and brought to the attention of the farmer for remedy e.g. located in particularly wet areas, on good conservation grassland/heath or soils prone to erosion.

<p>Low - little or no damage caused by supplementary feeding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage limited to a single feed site. • Impact very localised - <u>restricted to within 3m band</u> around feeders. Damage should be visible as <u>less than 50%</u> bare earth (May) OR relatively few weeds/agriculturally favoured species (early June on). 	15
Between Low & Medium: Multiple feed sites with <u>little damage</u> OR damage between low & medium	11

<p>Medium - damage fairly obvious but restricted in area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damage limited to a single feed site. • Majority of <u>damage confined to a 3m band</u> around the feeder and visible as <u>up to 100% bare soil</u> (May) or <u>weeds</u> (early June on) within the band but very little outside of it. 	7
<p>Between Medium & High: <u>Multiple feed sites</u> with <u>medium damage</u> OR damage between medium & high</p>	2
<p>High - obvious damage extending beyond the 3m band:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple feed sites, most with obvious <u>damage extending more than 3m</u> from the feeder. Visible as extensive area of bare soil and ‘cut-up’ ground (May) OR luxuriant growth of annual weeds e.g. fat hen, redshank, sow-thistle, chickweed later in summer. A build up of dung may be evident. 	-7

A4. Impact on Natural Water Sources

Scoring Notes:

- *The area to be assessed includes the water source and, if present, the area of surrounding wetland vegetation.*
- *Damage includes cutting-up (poaching) of the associated wetland vegetation, muddying the water and contamination with dung.*
- *Where there are multiple natural water sources, the assessment should be based on the one with the most damage.*
- *Care must be taken to distinguish between:*
 - *Rocky or stony water sources that are naturally sparsely vegetated*
 - *Water sources whose vegetation has been reduced by trampling (these tend to have bare, muddy bottoms.)*
- *If no natural water sources are present please note this in the comments box.*

<p>Low – Little or no obvious damage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No dung in water or on surrounding rock over which water flows. • Hoof prints sparse or absent. • If present, wetland vegetation (including mosses) should not have been eroded by trampling - <u>bare mud/peat originating from disturbance should cover no more than 25% of the area.</u> • Undisturbed water in ponds/pools should be clear, and in the case of shallow ones, well vegetated. 	15
<p>Between Low & Medium: <u>Multiple natural water sources</u> with <u>little damage</u> OR damage between low & medium</p>	11
<p>Medium - damage fairly obvious but not excessive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little dung should be present in the assessment area. • <u>Depressions from hooves</u> resulting in a somewhat pock-marked, uneven appearance but not ‘churned up’. • Wetland vegetation may be patchy and discontinuous but bare mud/peat <u>originating from disturbance</u> should cover no more than <u>50%</u> of the area. • The water in ponds/pools may be slightly discoloured due to suspended sediments but the bottom should be visible in shallow areas. 	7
<p>Between Medium & High: <u>Multiple natural water sources</u> with <u>medium damage</u> OR damage between medium & high</p>	2
<p>High – very obvious damage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant amounts of dung in and around the water source. (NB this will be harder to detect as the time between the grazing period and the assessment increases.) • <u>Depressions from hooves</u> present over <u>much</u> of the area resulting in a very pock-marked, uneven appearance i.e. very churned up. • Considerable areas of bare soil (>75%) originating from disturbance. Vegetation much reduced, patchy and discontinuous. 	-7

A5. Bare Soil & Erosion

Scoring Notes:

- Bare soil is to be expected along regular stock routes and around regular congregation points (e.g. by gates) and is acceptable as long as it isn't excessive and resulting in erosion.
- Bare ground associated with feed sites is covered under A3 and should not be included in this section unless it extends beyond the main feed site area. Likewise, bare ground associated with artificial watering points should not be recorded here unless it is due to unsuitable siting of the water point and/or is deemed to constitute a problem.
- Bare soil created by wildlife (e.g. rabbits and ants) or by other means not associated with agriculture, should be excluded from the assessment but noted in the comments box.

Low - Little or no damage other than that which is acceptable:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On thinner soils: bare soil more or less restricted to regular stock paths, 'pinch' points and gathering pints. On deeper clay soils - <5% bare soil in late May/June/July. • <u>No signs of erosion</u> visible. 	5
Between Low & Medium:	1
Medium:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bare soil mainly along regularly used routes or areas but <u>erosion occurring at a few points</u>. • Ruts from vehicles restricted in distribution and not excessive. • Bare soil extending a short distance beyond the main feeding area. 	-3
Between Medium & High:	-10
High:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of bare and eroding soil found at intervals along regularly used routes leading to exposure of the underlying rock. • Excessive areas of bare soil within main grazing area. • Bare soil extending out significantly from the main feed sites. • Significant rutting caused by vehicles/machinery particularly going between access gate and feed points. 	-17

B. Relating to Undesirable and/or Invasive Species

B1. Encroaching Scrub

This section sets out to quantify the amount of, and threat posed by, potentially invasive, native woody species as well as that from non-native woody species (e.g. Cotoneaster) within the assessment area.

Scoring Notes:

- Scrub levels should only be assessed within the eligible assessment area (i.e. grazeable area).
- The emphasis is on encroaching scrub. **Any scrub that the farmer would not be permitted to remove e.g. mature scrub or areas of scrub with a woodland flora beneath should not be included when assessing scrub cover.**
- Only potentially invasive, native woody species including hazel, blackthorn, whitethorn, gorse (furze) and briars should be included in the scrub estimates. Any queries regarding the inclusion of other species will be dealt with on a site by site basis. Please contact the BFCP if such a situation arises.
- Although usually categorised as a dwarf shrubs the following should be treated as 'Scrub' for the purpose of this assessment if it is having a negative impact on typical Burren winterage vegetation:
 - Burnet Rose (*Rosa pimpinellifolia*) – where undergrazing has led to it becoming over tall (>50cm).
 - Heathers & heaths (mainly *Calluna vulgaris* but very occasionally *Erica cinerea* and *Erica tetralix*) – where a significant area is covered by tall heather (knee height or above) and it is all of a similar age.

Where the above occur please make a note in the comments box.

- Where scrub seedlings, suckers or saplings are common and easily seen without searching, use the scores in italics.
- Note the main species present in the comments box.

Negligible (<1%): Encroaching scrub rare, occurring as a few sporadic individuals or one or two discrete patches.	15 (13)
Encroaching scrub cover 1-5%:	9 (7)
Encroaching scrub cover 6 – 10%	3 (1)
Encroaching scrub cover between 11 - 25%	-7 (-9)
Encroaching scrub cover between > 26	-18 (-18)

B2. Bracken & Purple Moor-grass

Scoring Notes:

- The timing of your field survey can significantly affect your perception of bracken on a site. The extent and density of bracken may be underestimated when visiting sites in May or June as the fronds will not have fully unfurled although you will get a good idea of its distribution. In this case you should note whether the growth is somewhat linear, indicating that it is growing along and more or less restricted to soil filled grikes or more extensive and use this to extrapolate the likely density/canopy cover that will exist later in the summer.
- PMG is a natural component of certain Burren habitats e.g. wetland vegetation around flushes and springs and certain types of heath (latter found mainly in the north western and western parts of the Burren) in which cases its presence is acceptable as long as it is not resulting in extensive areas becoming covered by a thick litter layer (little soil visible through it).
- Bracken and purple moor-grass litter should normally be recorded under A2: litter. However, adjustments can be made for flushes and heather-PMG heaths where PMG is a natural part of the vegetation.
- You will need to familiarise yourself with purple moor-grass so that you can identify it. It is easily identified when in flower but as it does not flower until late summer (July/August) you need to learn to identify it when not in flower.

<p>Low:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both species, if present, occurring sporadically and <u>never forming dense patches</u> which suppress the grassland or heath flora. • Bracken usually restricted to soil filled grikes and fronds relatively short (average < 0.5m) even late in year. • Purple moor-grass acceptable in wetter areas (e.g. in or around springs or flushes) as long as it is not forming dense stands with a thick litter layer which is suppressing the other vegetation. <u>If PMG appears to be spreading into areas of dry grassland or heath it should be scored in one of the classes below.</u> 	5
<p>Between Low & Medium</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The combined cover of dense stands of Bracken & PMG should not exceed 5% of the grazeable area except in the case of PMG in flushes or heather-PMG heath. 	1
<p>Medium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or both species relatively commonly and easily seen but the combined <u>cover of dense stands</u> which may suppress the normal ground flora should be <u><10%</u> (¹ see exception below). • Or Bracken with an open canopy (i.e. not dense) for the most part, the closed canopy not exceeding 10% of the assessment area so the ground flora is barely affected. Average height of the fronds should be <0.5m. • Or PMG is spreading into dry grassland or Dryas heath, dense stands must cover no more than 10% of the assessment area. • ¹ The cover of live PMG can be high <u>in heather-PMG heath or grazeable wet flushes</u> so long as the dead <u>PMG litter layer is thin</u> and covers no more than 50% of the assessment area. 	-3
<p>Between Medium & High:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closed canopy of bracken covers 10-20% 	-10

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Litter layer associated with PMG in <u>heather-PMG heath or grazeable wet flushes</u> cover between medium and high e.g. <u>areas of thicker litter discontinuous and patchy</u> 	
<p>High:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bracken forming dense stands with a closed canopy which covers >20% of the area resulting the suppression of the normal ground flora. Usually tall. Or PMG is spreading into dry grassland or Dryas heath, dense stands cover more than 10% of the assessment area. In <u>Calluna-PMG heath or grazeable PMG flushes</u> - a <u>thick PMG</u> litter layer (soil not visible through dead leaves) covers >50% of the assessment area. 	-17

B3. Weeds & Agriculturally-favoured Species

Scoring Notes:

- Weeds are acceptable when confined to restricted locations such as wall bands (usually <5m band alongside wall) but they should cover a limited area and not extend into the main body of the site.
- Common weed species on winterages include: docks (*Rumex sp.*), creeping & common thistle (*Cirsium arvense*, *C. vulgare*), ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), nettles (*Urtica dioica*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*), sow-thistles (*Sonchus asper*, *S. oleraceus*), redshank (*Persicaria maculata*), burdock (*Arctium sp.*)
- Agriculturally favoured species are those common in more productive or intensive farming systems but which are normally rare or have a very restricted distribution on weak to middling winterages unless their nutrient status has increased due to excessive feeding or too much summer grazing. They may occur naturally in deeper pockets of soil. Species include: perennial rye-grass, timothy, common sorrel, red bartsia.

<p>Low:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weed species absent or rare - if present restricted to a few sporadic individuals in wall bands, shelter spots or around feeders/water troughs, the latter equivalent to 'low' or 'low-medium' in section A3 'Feed Site Damage'. 	15
<p>Between Low & Medium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds occasional – restricted to a wall bands, shelter spots or around feeders/water troughs but rarely extending beyond these areas 	11
<p>Medium:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds & agriculturally favoured species most common in wall bands, shelter spots and/or around feed/water troughs but rarely extending more than 5m out from these main zones. Scattered individuals may be distributed throughout the site but their overall cover should be less than 1% of the area. 	7
<p>Between Medium & High:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cover of weeds & agriculturally favoured species outside of wall bands, shelter spots and feed sites between 1-5%. 	2
<p>High:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeds & agriculturally favoured species obvious throughout the assessment area as: numerous but well spaced individuals or sporadic but obvious dense patches or in the worst cases, as individuals or patches covering much of the area. Cover >5%. 	-7

C. Relating to Site and Ecological Integrity

C1. Ecological Integrity

The purpose of this question is to determine whether the pasture retains its ecological integrity i.e. the vegetation (plant communities) present is typical of that which would be expected on a well managed Burren winterage-type pasture or it has been modified to some degree by factors such as more intensive summer grazing, fertiliser application, mechanical reclamation and reseeded.

Scoring Notes:

- Where historic summer grazing (particularly on non-SAC, additional Annex 1 fields) has had a positive impact in terms of reducing scrub encroachment on archaeological or cultural features then this may be viewed as an ‘over-riding’ conservation interest and the scores adjusted as outlined in the score
- If there has been any significant loss of grazed habitat within the field during the BFCP that is not the result of an approved action (e.g. vehicular access track) under the BFCP then contact the BFCP office before calculating the final ‘health’ score for the field.

<p>Typical: The vegetation is typical of a range of grassland and heath communities found on Burren winterages – high species diversity and lots of flowers seen in spring and summer. Changes due to grazing should be minimal. Pastures should not have undergone any discernable agricultural improvement in terms of reclamation and the vegetation should not have been modified by summer grazing or other management practices.</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>Slightly Modified: Fields should be scored as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weak or middling winterages which have a history of very <u>light summer or year round grazing</u> with <u>cattle</u> where the <u>vegetation is only very slightly modified</u>, is still species-rich and includes the majority of flowering plants that you would expect to see on that type of Burren winterage. 2. As above but where there is a history of light summer grazing with <u>sheep</u>. 3. Winterages whose vegetation has been slightly modified by past feeding or stocking management – typically with areas whose flora has been modified due to nutrient enrichment. 4. Unimproved winterages with little or no grazing and no other problems. <p><i>If justified in terms of having a positive impact on archaeological &/or cultural features a score of ‘-6’ can be increased to ‘0’. Please include a note in the calculator to if such an adjustment is made.</i></p>	<p>0</p> <p>-6</p> <p>-6</p> <p>0</p>
<p>Moderately Modified: The vegetation still retains strong elements of the typical flora found on a Burren Winterage but these are much reduced, having been replaced by agriculturally-favoured species that are tolerant of more intensive summer grazing. This category will usually result from more intensive summer grazing but should not be used if the pasture has been reseeded in the last 5 years and/or is regularly fertilised with artificial fertiliser or slurry.</p> <p><i>If justified in terms of having a positive impact on archaeological &/or cultural features a score of ‘-17’ can be increased to ‘-6’. Please include a note in the calculator to if such an adjustment is made.</i></p>	<p>-17</p>
<p>Significantly Modified: The vegetation has been significantly modified by: reclamation; agricultural improvement including reseeded and/or regular applications of artificial fertiliser or slurry; and/or intensive grazing. It is relatively species-poor in terms of those plants typically found on healthy Burren winterages or in Burren meadows, the flora being dominated by agriculturally-favoured species and weeds. Where this applies to the whole or part of a field, either the whole field or the modified area is best treated as improved agricultural grassland and excluded from the M1 assessment. However, if the field or area has been nominated for habitat restoration then it should be scored. Contact the BFCP office if in any doubt.</p>	<p>-28</p>