

# Managing Your Pastures Better:

## Management Intensive Grazing 101

Presenter:

**Dr. Woody Lane**

**Livestock Nutritionist & Forage Specialist**

**Lane Livestock Services**

**Roseburg, Oregon**

Host/Moderator: Jay Parsons

**April 22, 2014**

*This webinar is being offered in cooperation  
with the American Sheep Industry Association  
Rebuild the Sheep Inventory Committee.*





# Intensive Grazing

Management Intensive Grazing



# How Do We Manage Forages?

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## Standard Recommendation:



Animals in: 8"

Animals out: 3"

*Example:*

Ewe raising twins in  
early lactation

How many inches of grass  
does she need to meet  
her nutritional  
requirements?



# Managing Forages

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Can We Answer These Basic Questions:



How long can 50 ewes  
graze a 15-acre  
paddock?

How many acres are  
needed to support 50  
ewes for 4 days?

Is there a better way?

# Yes

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## How Do We Balance an Animal's Diet?

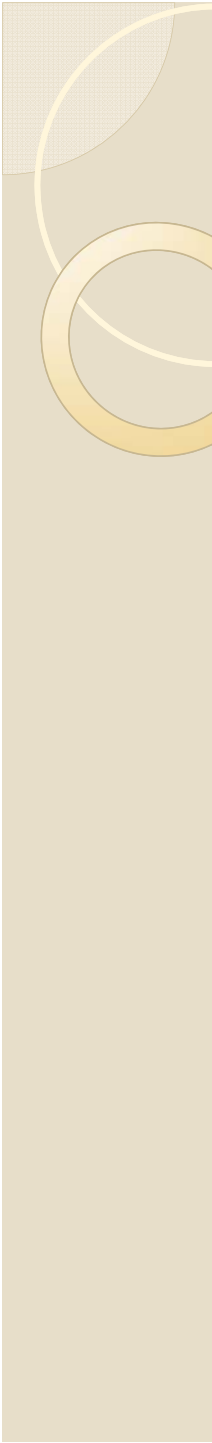


By Weight

Pounds of feed

Therefore —

Manage Forages  
by **Weight**



## By Weight (Mass of DM)

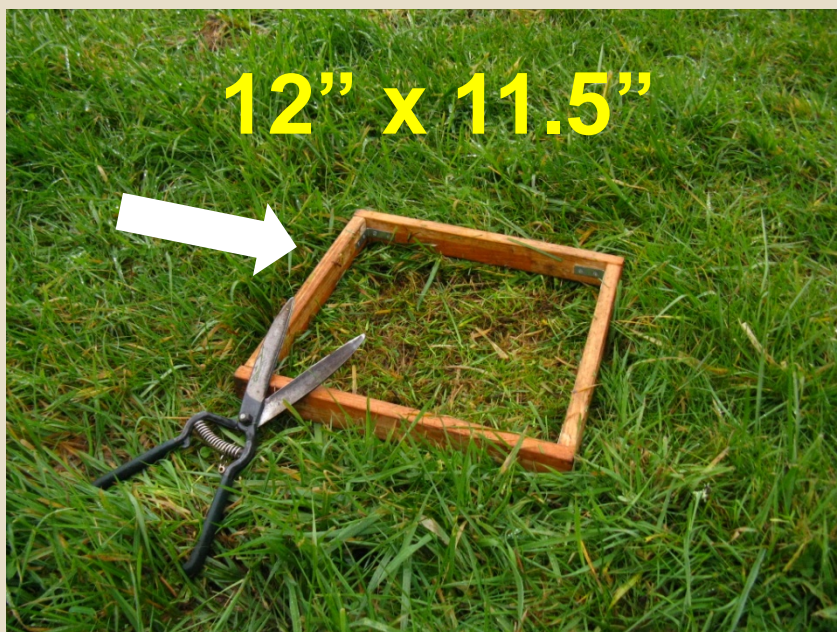
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**Total Mass(DM)**

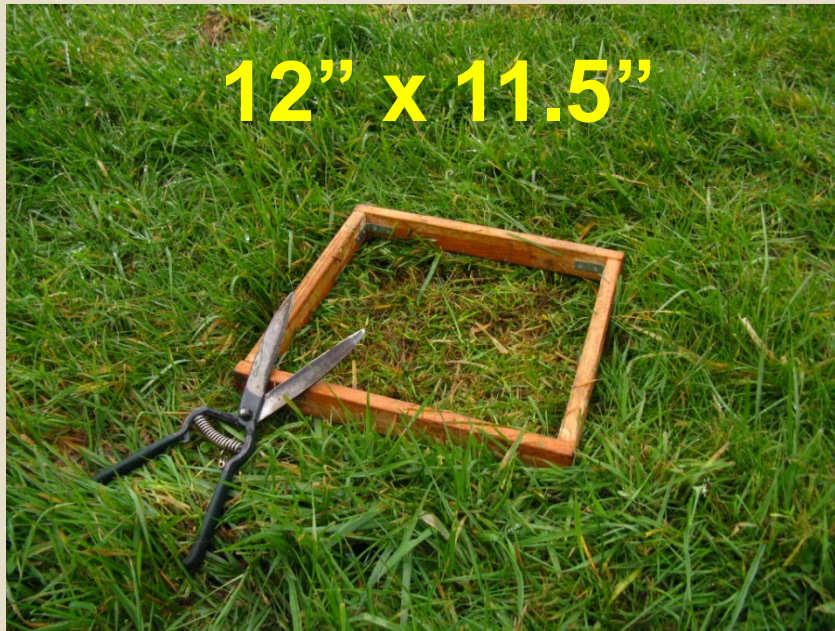
**3,000 lb**

**How do we measure  
forage mass?**











**= 138 square inches**

**12" x 11.5"**  **26 grams dry forage**  
*microwave or fruit drier*

**> 26 g DM / 138 square inches**

**x 100**  **2,600 lb DM / acre**



# By Weight (Mass)

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**Total Mass**                      **3,000 lb**

**Residual Mass**            **~~1,000 lb~~**

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**Available Mass**              **2,000 lb**

**This is the forage  
available for grazing**



# Example

flock size = 125 ewes

1 acre = **2,000** lb Available Forage

1 ewe @ 160 lb @ 5% body weight = 8 lb/day

125 ewes will graze **1,000 lb** forage DM/day

1 acre = 2 days of grazing for 125 ewes

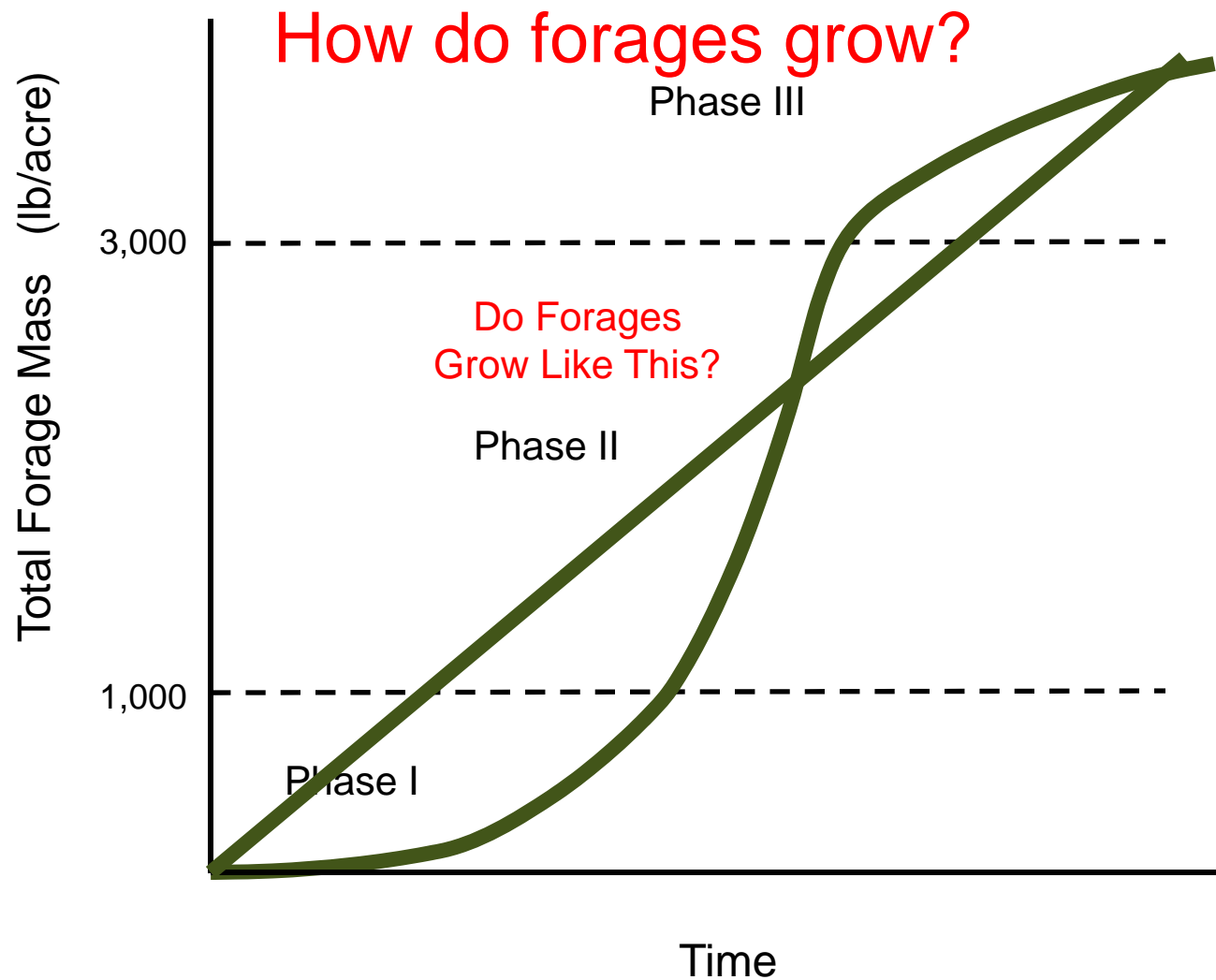
3-acre field = ewes are OK for 6 days







# Forage Growth Curve



# 5" Grass — Mass vs Height

**Density  
is Critical**

3,000

611
611
611
611
2-111

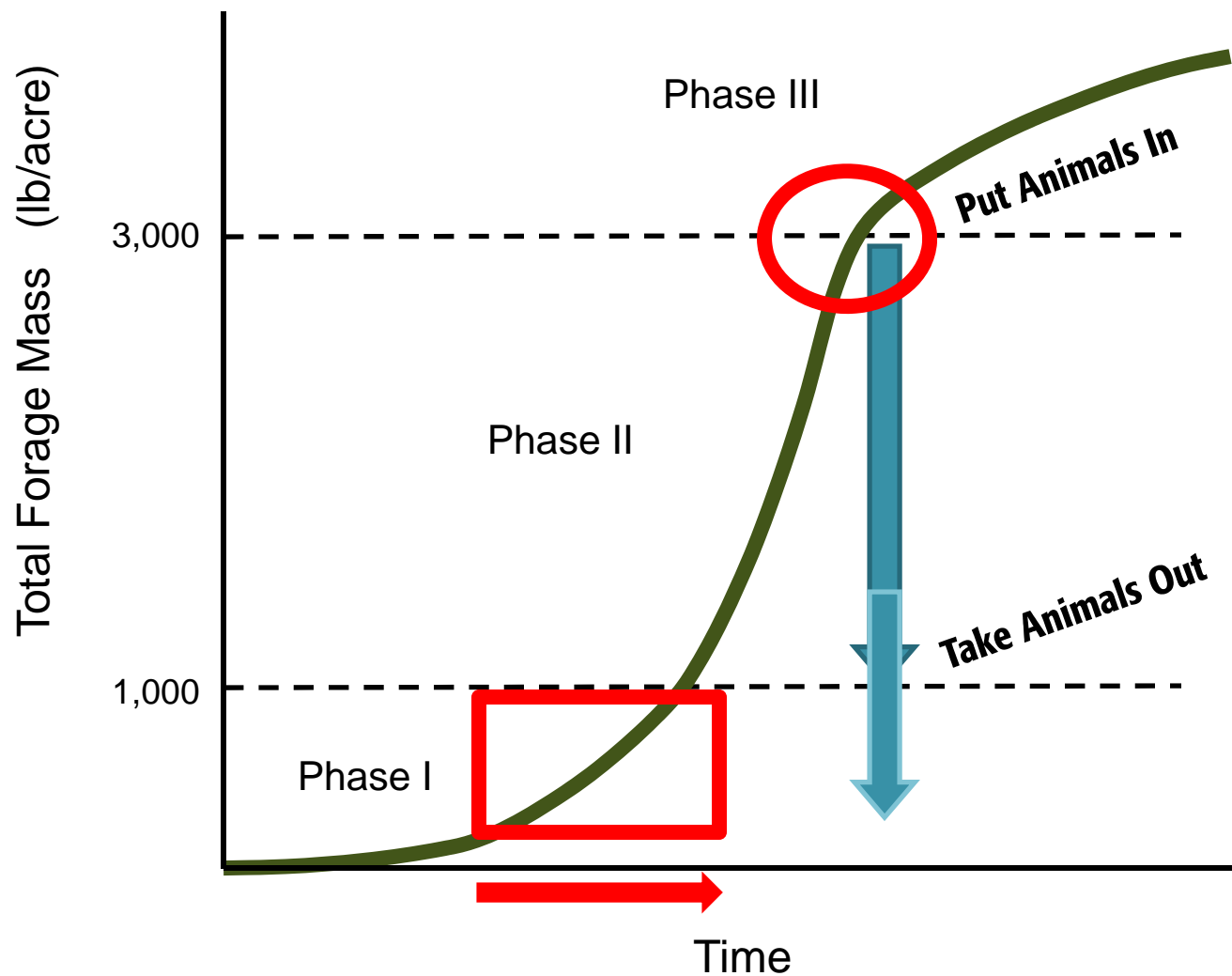
2,000

411
411
411
411
911

1,300

311
311
311
311
611

# Intensive Grazing — What to Do

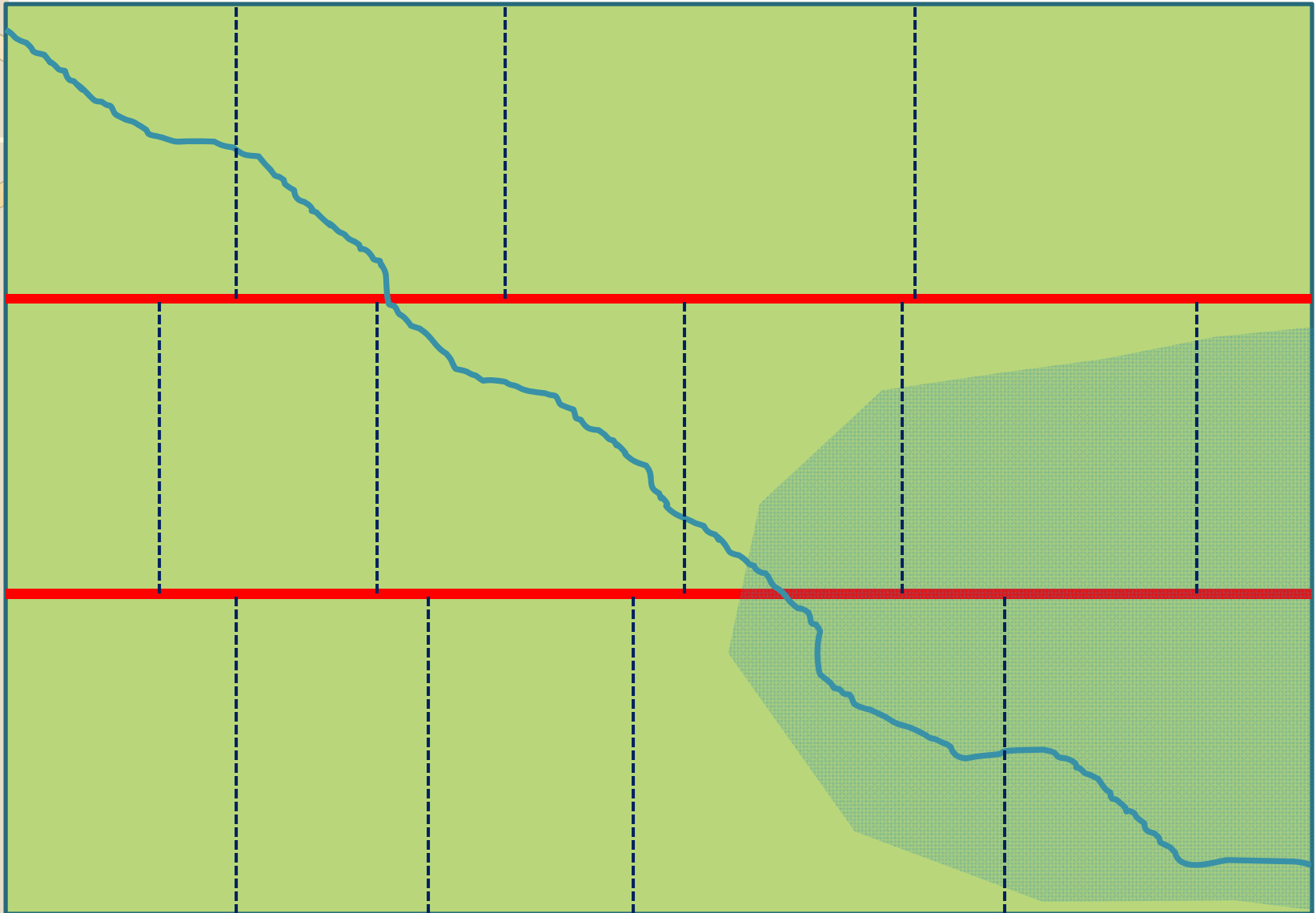






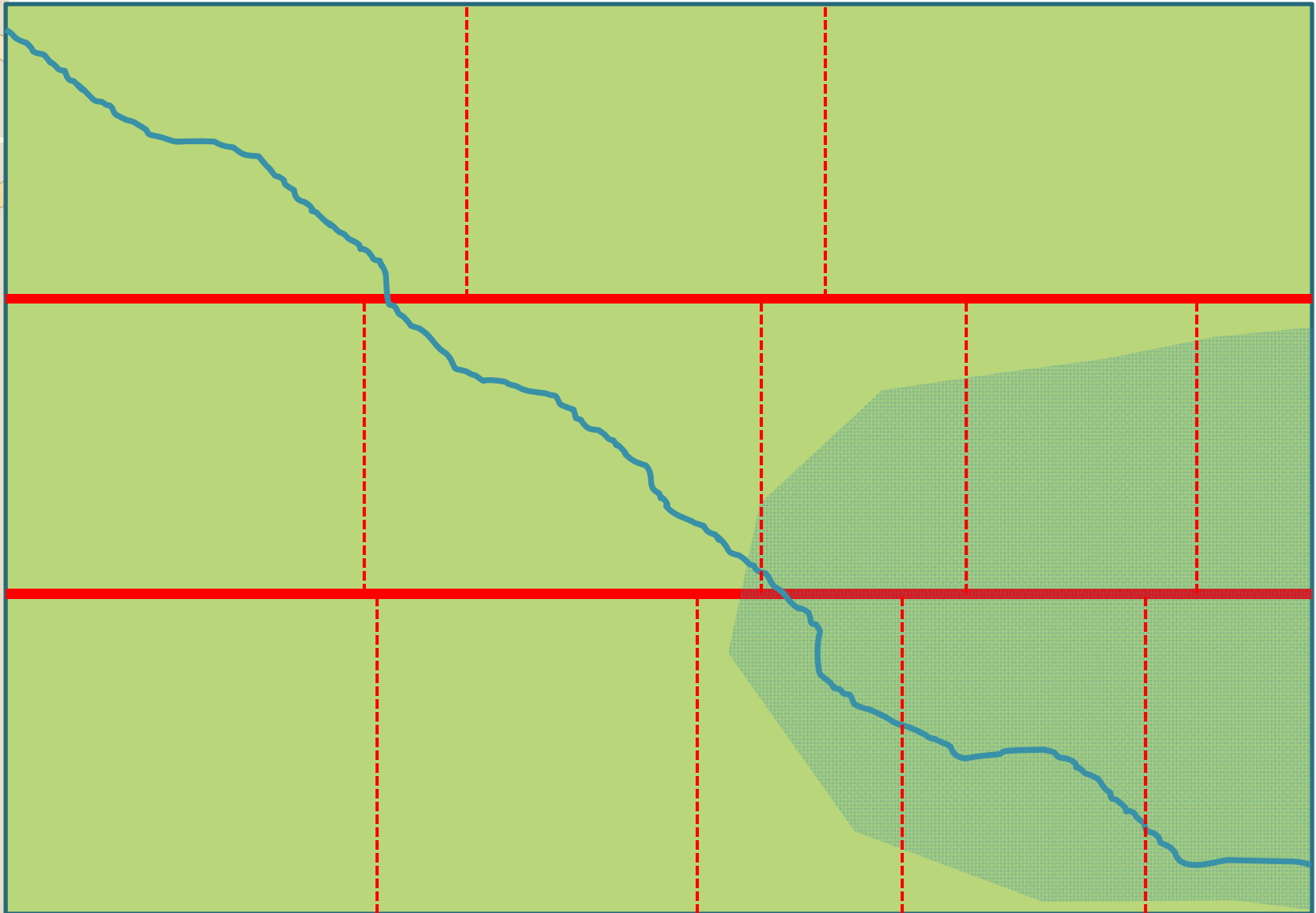
Fencing: May → early June

Each cell = 2 days



Fencing: late July → August

Each cell = 2 days



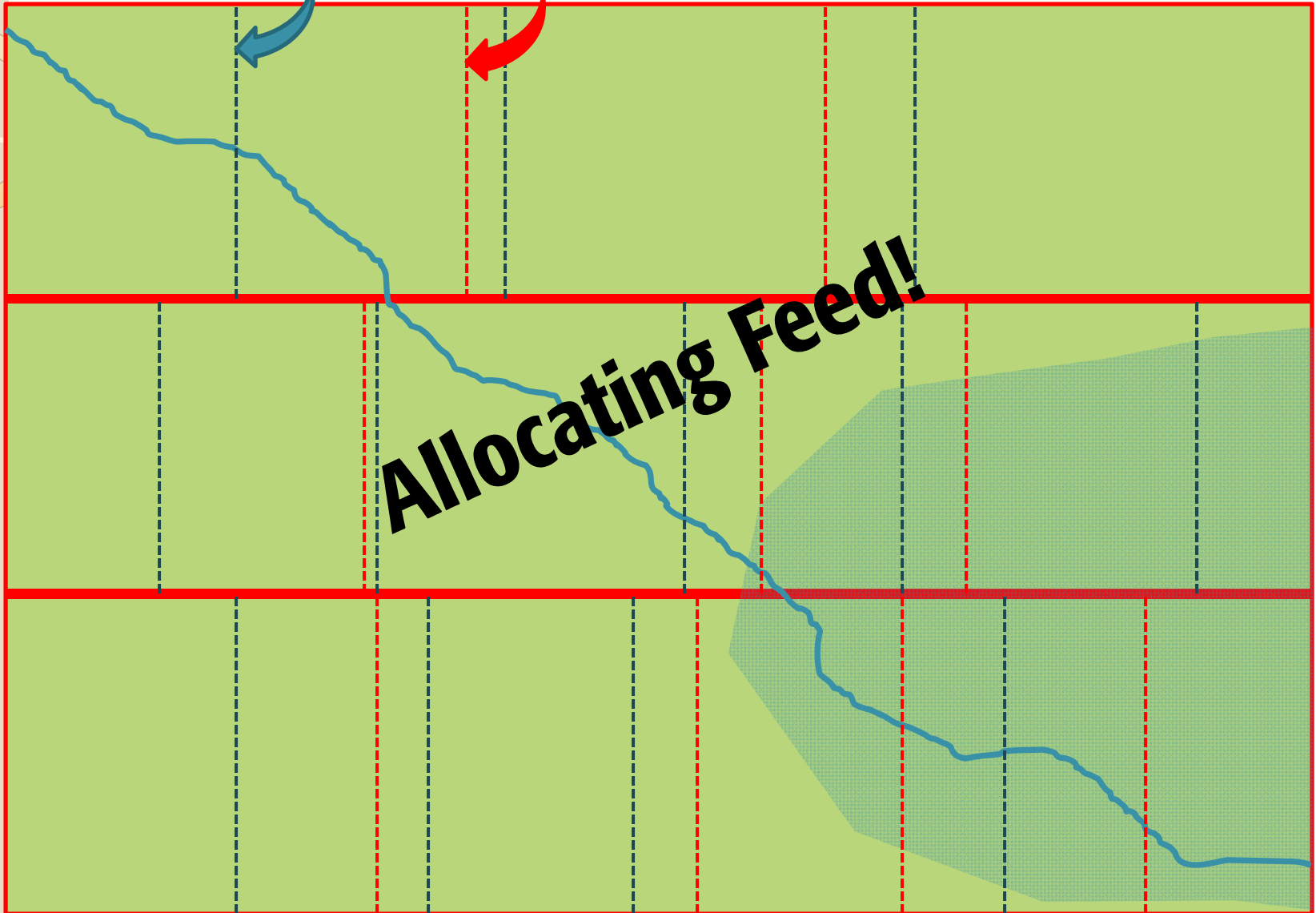


May

August

2 Cycles Through the Field

**Allocating Feed!**







H  
E  
A  
V  
E  
N

N

HUMBOLDT FALLS 8km

157km INVERCARGILL

END OF ROAD 9km

95km TE ANAU

BIG BAY VIA PYKE 71km

21km CASCADE CREEK

MARTINS BAY 71km

40km MILFORD SOUND

LAKE MCKERROW 42km

19km HOMER TUNNEL

LOWER PYKE 27km

8km ROAD JUNCTION

HIDDEN FALLS 18km

928m KEY SUMMIT

HEIGHT ABOVE SEA LEVEL 153m

40m MUSEUM

HARRIS SADDLE 1277m

UP RIVER

DOWN RIVER

MURRAY GUNN

B  
A  
Y  
O  
F  
B  
I  
S  
C  
A  
Y



# Specifics of MIG

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- Introduce sheep at the top of Phase II
- Remove sheep at the bottom of Phase II
- Residual — Don't graze into Phase I
  - Adds 7–14 days to reach bottom of Phase II
  - Stresses some plants
  - Open areas for weeds
- Avoid Phase III
- Grazing in Phase II
  - Efficiency — most efficient
  - Nutrition — excellent
  - Forages — healthy, sustainable, growing fast



# 4 Rules of MIG

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**Stay in Phase II growth**

**Leave enough Residual**

- 800—1,000 lb DM/acre

**Protect Regrowth**

- 5-Day Rule

**Water & minerals move with sheep**

- each cell contains H<sub>2</sub>O & TM mixture









# Grass Farmer

**Capture  
Sunlight**







**Grass Farmer**

**Shepherd**







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