

## Research on livestock road casualties

### Extracts from Nibblers online discussion group

I am trying to get some information about the number of livestock fatalities (or just accidents involving cattle or pony 'v' cars) on grazing schemes which have cattle-grided roads. It is mainly to re-assure local residents that when grazing schemes are introduced the chances of animals being mown down by cars is actually quite small (well I hope it is anyway).

Therefore if you have a grazing scheme and have had any cattle or ponies killed (not too interested in sheep) please let me know, or indeed if you have been grazing for years and never had any problems that would be equally as useful.

Many thanks.  
RICHARD ELSTON

Richard Elston  
Hardy's Egdon Heath Project Manager

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Richard

The sad fact is that no grazing with roads scheme is going to be completely safe. The most telling statistic of livestock fatalities is in the New Forest. Each year the Verderers (actually each court session) publish the livestock fatality figures and it makes for grim reading. I haven't looked at the latest figures but in the 3 years I worked in the Forest each year there were over 100+ ponies (mainly ponies) and cattle killed on the roads. This is despite 40 mph, signs, calming and very aware locals (although complacency is an issue) and reflective collars. However, the plus side, if there is one, is that the numbers of animals is in the 4,000 - 6,000 range and the amount of traffic particularly on some roads is very heavy. How this pans out in terms of New Forest area/car numbers/fatalities would be interesting I suspect that it would be low.

Again on the positive, to my knowledge (and Tim-brodie James may be able to confirm) on Hartland Moor which has cattle and Exmoors there have been no fatalities on the roads through the NNR at least in the 3 years I have been at Slepe Farm (next door to Hartland). Importantly perhaps, much depends on the nature of the roads, placement of grids and access points across the road. It may be worth others contributing on design principles to minimise the risks to both livestock and drivers.

Sean Cooch  
English Nature - Dorset Team

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I would personally be interested in any good advice that is available re. design principles for fencing along roadsides. Our grazing feasibility study currently suggests this is critical, but seems to advise against barbed wire, as the site is a Country Park. One of my major concerns is road traffic accidents and animal deaths. Any advice gratefully received,  
Sue Sheppard.

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Sue

I have a few things that may be of use. A scheme that I have been involved with in west Dorset (near the landmark Hardy's Monument) looked into grazing two areas of heathland split by a very 'difficult' road.

The road is on a steep slope with nasty bends and no current speed restrictions. Some of the traffic that belts through this site (particularly on two wheels) is pretty hairy. Anyway working with Dorset County Council's Highways engineering consultancy we came up with a range of ways to minimise risk of livestock fatalities. The obvious one is speed restrictions, but built into the scheme the fencing of the two separate areas of heath allowed for livestock access at several crossing points. On driver 'entry' to the area the site was to be gridded with single vehicle access. Much as for urban traffic calming the use of road narrowing was investigated. But ultimately it would be worth talking to your own highways people as well as other site managers. Incidentally the above scheme hasn't as yet been implemented! But hopefully will be.

Another point regarding fencing is that for the Hardy Monument site which is very public with footpaths and bridleways all over it barbed wire was never contemplated. This was a preference of Forest Enterprise and I was equally happy not to employ barbed wire. I hate the stuff and if ponies are used there is no need. I know there are mixed views on this but again in reference to the New Forest the A31, the main road through the Forest is fenced without barbed wire as are the Forest inclosures.

As I am sure you know grazing projects are hardly met with universal support these days so ensuring that fears over road safety are addressed is extremely important. This applies to any road whether used by a few day-trippers or locals. In the New Forest which is busy throughout the year livestock wandering across the roads is part of the scene and long may it continue. The increasingly vocal locals in every area only need to have one fatality or serious car accident and the next thing we know is the end of the grazing scheme.

Maybe a guidance note/handbook would be useful?

Best of luck with your own grazing project/s

Sean Cooch  
English Nature - Dorset

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Hi All,

Rather strange that GAP's nibblers discussion group should have had exchanges about safety of stock this week and this arrived with English Nature's Enquiry Service and forwarded on to me. Its called the .....

The Waidwerk Game Stop.

See attached leaflet\*. Its quite an advance on the usual reflective plates idea since it uses noise (acoustic), sight (optical) and smell (odorous) deterrents fitted around reflective material that is posted at 20 metre intervals alongside roads. (\*NB - tried to send this with leaflet attached but it failed - I will get the leaflet posted asap. Alternatively try their website).

Not sure though if this technique would be a deterrent to domestic stock? Would someone 'who has a need' like to follow this up please and report back in due course.

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