

Sheep in the Land of Fire and Ice Syllabus

Course Run: Sheep in the Land of Fire and Ice – Sauðfé í landi elds og ísa (HI S101 2019)

Instructor: Isabel C Barrio, Agricultural University of Iceland

Estimated Effort: 2 hours

Languages: Content: English | Videos: English | Transcripts: English

Course Description

The aim of this short course is to raise awareness of the environmental risks associated with inadequate management of natural resources. Grazing management is a common problem in many regions of the world, and this course uses Iceland as a case study because here traditional sheep grazing has been associated with extensive environmental degradation. We examine the sustainability of sheep grazing in Iceland and explore how history, socioeconomic factors and environmental conditions have influenced the management of grazing resources.

The course is designed for students in agriculture, and natural and environmental sciences at the graduate and undergraduate level but is accessible to anyone with a broad interest in sustainable management of natural resources.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, you will understand:

- The cultural, historical and economic relevance of sheep grazing in Iceland
- Current issues, initiatives and approaches to sheep grazing management in Iceland
- Basic ecological principles that drive sheep grazing systems, their complexity and dynamics

Course Content and Activities

| Block | Sections | Assignments |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Course Introduction | 1.1 Course introduction | Discussion: introduce yourself (not graded) Knowledge check 1 |
| 2. Sheep grazing in the North | 2.1 Sheep grazing in the North 2.2 Sheep grazing in Iceland 2.3 Sheep grazing can lead to soil erosion | Knowledge checks 2, 3, 4 |
| 3. Historical perspective of sheep grazing in Iceland | 3.1 Iceland before sheep 3.2 Modelling the ecosystem 3.3 Then sheep arrived | Knowledge checks 5, 6, 7, 8 |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| | 3.4 Efforts to mitigate environmental degradation | |
| 4. The present and the future of sheep grazing in Iceland | 4.1 Sheep in Iceland today 4.2 Current efforts in ecological research 4.3 Sustainable sheep grazing? | Discussion: Sustainable sheep grazing? (not graded) Knowledge checks 9, 10, 11 |
| 5. Summary and conclusions | 5.1 Summary and conclusions | Knowledge check 12 Final quiz Feedback |

Grading

A minimum of 60% is required to pass the course. The course will be graded based on the following criteria:

| Assessment type | Description | % of final grade |
|-----------------|---|------------------|
| Participation | Complete knowledge checks after learning new concepts | 60 |
| Final quiz | Prove that you understand core concepts presented in the course | 40 |

Accessibility Support

- Visit [edX Website Accessibility Policy](#).
- Contact accessibility@edx.org for accessibility questions, concerns, or feedback.

Course Help

To get help with course content, click the Discussion tab and post a question in “Course Q&A”. The course team will try to answer questions, but we also encourage you to seek help from your peers and assist peers who need help.

Technical Help

For general questions about using the edX platform, please refer to these resources:

- Technical Documentation: <https://docs.edx.org>
- Learner Help Center: <https://support.edx.org/hc/en-us>
- To get help with a technical problem, click the Support tab to contact edX Support.

Discussion Guidelines

In discussion forums you can express thoughts, develop ideas, and engage with other course participants and instructors. Each module has one or more discussions to help you apply the material of the course and most of them count toward your participation grade. You can also access these discussions on the Discussion page.

Here are some friendly guidelines to help you successfully participate in the discussions:

1. Review discussion postings before posting your own to avoid redundancy, and make sure you are in the right topic before posting.
2. When adding a post, mark it as a question or a discussion: questions raise issues that need answers, whereas discussions share ideas and start conversations.
3. Do not post answers to quiz questions.
4. Give your message a meaningful title: be descriptive, specific, and succinct. This will make it easier for readers to notice your post.
5. Use common good writing practices for online communication. For example:
 - Avoid TYPING IN ALL CAPS. It makes it difficult to read.
 - Be careful with humor and sarcasm - both can be easily misunderstood.
 - Check your writing for errors before posting.
 - Avoid excessive use of acronyms (LOL), emojis, and repeating punctuation (!!!!)
 - Offer sincere and constructive feedback. Please do not be overly critical of others.
6. Decide whether to follow the post - if so, you'll be notified when someone responds to it.