Indicator Factsheet: Livestock density

Indicator: Intensity of grassland use **Sub-indicator: Livestock density**	
Description	The indicator describes the intensity of grassland use based on the ratio of ruminant livestock to forage area. The indicator enables conclusions to be drawn about the necessary production volume of plant biomass per hectare and the amount of farm manure applied.
Data basis	IACS data from 2010 onwards, supplemented by agricultural statistics and the Thünen Agricultural Atlas at the municipal level
Calculation	$ruminant\ livestock\ density = \frac{\sum ruminant\ livestock\ units\ (RLU)}{\sum forage\ area\ in\ hectares\ (ha)}$
Spatial reporting level	**Coverage**: National; **Resolution**: Administrative units (100 ha hexagons, and in future areas with >25% open land (to be implemented)); **Reference area**: PG
Reporting period / interval	From 2010 / annually
Interpretation	**High habitat quality:** 0.3–1.0 RLU/ha forage area – For areas managed at low intensity (usually one to two times cut or extensively grazed) and whose yields are comparable to grassland stands of high conservation value with upper category HNV. **Medium habitat quality:** 1.0–1.4 and 0.0–0.3 RLU/ha forage area – For areas managed at moderate intensity. The value of 1.4 RLU/ha forage area is usually set as the reference value for the promotion of grassland extensification. **Low habitat quality**: other areas with higher ruminant livestock densities
Limitations	A number of factors must be taken into consideration when assessing the relevance of the study. These include the type of farming, the location of the animals and the form of animal husbandry (stables, pastures) employed. It is hypothesised that no import or export of forage occurs between the calculation units. It is becoming increasingly evident that small-scale variations, such as area-specific mowing times, grazing management and the period of use, can be represented with greater accuracy by means of remote sensing data.
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