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## Control of Saffron thistle in pasture using goats.

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Trial Title: Control of Saffron thistle in pasture using goats.

Trial Number: 85TS27

Location: Arrino - A. McAleer

Table 29. 87TS27 Saffron thistle heads removed from samples taken on three grazing treatments

		Distribution of samples of different percentage of saffron thistle heads eaten					
		No. saffron present	0-40%	41-70%	71-90%	91-96%	97-100%
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High stocking rate Goats	1985-86	3	5	6	17	7	26
	1986-87	12	1	9	21	10	11
	1987-88	28	2	1	1	1	31
High stocking rate Sheep	1985-86	3	34	5	7	0	15
	1986-87	10	52	1	0	0	1
	1987-88	5	52	3	2	0	2
Low stocking rate Goats	1985-86	9	27	2	1	2	23
	1986-87	32	23	4	5	0	0
	1986-88	26	0	0	1	0	37

Both the treatments using goats have removed a large proportion of Saffron thistle seed heads. This has been reflected in a decline in seedling density the following season (Table 30).

Table 30. 87TS27 Change in Saffron thistle density over three years using grazing treatments of sheep or goats

Grazing treatments	Saffron thistle densities (plants/m <sup>2</sup> )		
	1985	1986	1987
Sheep	27	34	26
Goats	30	31	3

Saffron thistle seedling densities remained relatively constant during the first two years of the trial, irrespective of the grazing treatments' effectiveness. However on the grazing treatments where goats were preventing seed formation, once the bulk of the dormant seed had been depleted, seedling density started to decline.