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Grazing down process: the implications of sheep's ingestive behavior for sward management

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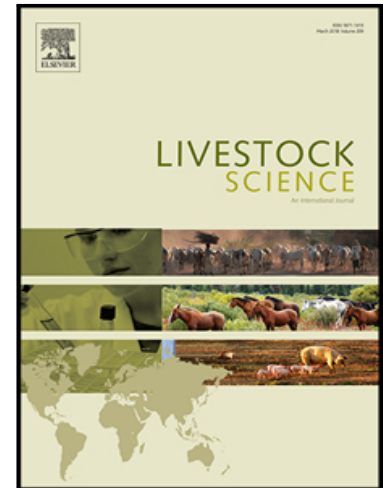
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Highlights

- Low and moderate grazing intensities promote a grazing down around 45% of non-limiting pre-grazing sward height.
- The sward structure and the forage chemical composition of annual ryegrass sward (*Lolium multiflorum* Lam.) managed under low and moderate grazing intensities in rotational stocking are suitable for sheep grazing in the beginning of the sward reproductive stage.
- During grazing down stages in the end of the sward reproductive stage, both grazing intensities studied restricted the sheep's ingestive behavior patterns in the larger spatial and temporal scales in a foraging hierarchy (e.g. bites by feeding station, steps per minute, and grazing time).
- Sheep's behavioral response depends on: (i) grazing intensity, (ii) period of sward reproductive stage, and (iii) forage structural composition during grazing down.

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