INTRODUCTION

The idea of watching animals, both eating and resting, in order to assess their state of health, is no new concept in animal husbandry. Only recently however has the idea been extended to the systematic recording of their behaviour on the pasture in order to ascertain their reaction to different types of environment, and from these reactions attempt some evaluation of the factors making up the environment.

The emphasis so far in grazing behaviour studies has been on the comparing of diff erent systems of management under a given set of environmental conditions. Little work has been done to assess the extent of individual and herd variation and this has been a serious disadvantage when attempting to understand the results from any one experiment in relation to other results. Associated with this limitation is the fact that the values measured in grazing behaviour trials are not necessarily related to production - or even to pasture intake. A basic factor such as Dry Matter Intake, if incorporated into grazing behaviour trials, would increase their value enormously, both in the use of individual results, and in any comparison between experiments.

If Dry Matter were taken as the basic means of comparison of results, any trial on grazing behaviour would involve some method of determining the D.M. intake. The methods at present in use are usually difficult and involve long laboratory analysis. It has been suggested that in fact some factor of behaviour, either grazing time or ruminating time, may be directly related to Dry Matter intake. This trial attempts to demonstrate whether in fact, in a normal grazing behaviour trial, either of these factors, or any other easily measured, can be taken to give any indications of differences in D.M. intake.

The trial took place in two parts - the first in the wet season, and the second in the dry season. Therefore some discussion is also included on general differences in behaviour during these two per iods. Within this general investigation was a pilot trial to measure grazing intensity variations.