

INTRODUCTION

Pastureland and Hayland Interpretations Forage Suitability Groups

DEFINITION

Forage Suitability Groups (FSGs) are composed of one or more individual soil map unit components having similar potentials and limitations for forage production within the specified Major Land Resource Area (MLRA).

The soils making up an FSG are sufficiently uniform to:

1. Support the same adapted forage plants under the same management conditions;
2. Require similar conservation treatment and management to produce adapted forages selected in the quality and quantity desired, and;
3. Have comparable potential productivity.

FORAGE SUITABILITY GROUP REPORT CONTENT

Each report is identified with a unique descriptive name and number. The report also contains the MLRA that the group occurs in and the Land Resource Unit (LRU) if the MLRA has been further subdivided.

The following is a short description for each section of the report.

- **Physiographic Features** - Describes the landform (s) that the groups of soils occupy.
- **Climate Features** - Describes the climate for the MLRA or LRU. The climate information in this section is tailored for its applicability to forage production and management.
- **Soil Properties** - Lists the chemical and physical properties of the soils that can affect forage plant adaptation, management and production potential.
- **Adapted Species List** - Identifies forage species that are best adapted to the soil properties and climatic conditions stated in the FSG report.

- **Production Estimates** - Provides the yield potential of several commonly grown forage crops under dryland or irrigated conditions. Production estimates presented in the report represent the total annual above ground biomass on an air-dry-matter basis.
- **Forage Growth Curves Section** - Displays the growth curve or seasonal distribution of production for various forage species and mixtures. Growth curves are useful for matching periods of growth with times to graze or to determine best time for mechanical harvest of the forage during the growing season.
- **Soil Limitations** - Identifies soil and/or landscape factors that can adversely affect forage production or impact management flexibility.
- **Management Consideration Section** - Suggests management strategies that may be employed to mitigate the impacts of the soil limitations.
- **FSG Documentation** - This section contains the following information:
 - Similar FSG's** (if there are any) that resemble or may be confused with the current FSG, and notes the differences between them.
 - References** used for assembling the FSG report
 - State Correlation** lists State(s) that have been correlated with the current site.
 - Site Approval** indicates the Author, FSG approval, and Technical Advisors that provided information and data to complete the report.

For more information on Forage Suitability Groups, refer to the [National Range and Pasture Handbook, Chapter 3, Section 2.](#)

HOW TO USE FORAGE SUITABILITY GROUPS

Forage Suitability Groups are documents based on soils information. To properly use the information contained in an FSG, one first needs to identify the Soil Survey Area and Soil Map Unit name or symbol for the area where you are planning to grow or are currently growing forages. This information can be found in the Soil Survey for your local area or county. For help on how to use a Soil Survey or to obtain a copy, contact your local [NRCS Colorado Field Office](#).

Once the Soil Survey Area and Soil Map Unit name or symbol have been identified, use the Soil Map Unit/FSG Table to identify the corresponding FSG number and name.

If you need further assistance, contact your local NRCS Field Office.