

Pasture Condition Scoresheet - Standard for IRRIGATED PASTURE - VERSION 2.0 Updated

Cooperator					Date			
Conservationist					Pasture number(s)			
Forage Suitability Group(s)								
Current Years Precipitation (check one)		Above Normal	Normal	Below Normal				
Evaluate the site and rate each indicator based upon your observations. Scores for each indicator may range from 1 to 5. Multiply the points x the weight to get weighted points. Sum the								
Indicator/Weight	1 Points	2 Point	3 Points	4 Point	5 Points	Points	Wt.	Wtd. Pts.
Percent Desirable Plants / 10%	Desirable forage species represent <30% of stand (air-dry weight). Annual weeds, other undesirable herbaceous plants, and/or woody species, dominate pasture.	Desirable forage species represent 30 to 50% of stand (air-dry weight). Broadleaf weeds and other undesirable herbaceous species are prevalent and expanding. Woody species often present.	Desirable forage species represent 50 to 75% of stand (air-dry weight). Undesirable broadleaf weeds and annual grasses present and expanding. Some woody species may be present.	Desirable forage species represent 75 to 90% of stand (air-dry weight). Remainder of the stand is composed primarily of perennial forage species with intermediate grazing value. Few undesirable broadleaf weeds or annual grasses present. No woody species.	Desirable forage species exceed 90% of pasture stand (air-dry weight). Remainder of the stand is comprised of perennial forage species having intermediate grazing value.		1.0	
Live Plant Cover (Live stems and green leaf cover of all species at adjusted 3" height.) / 15%	FOLIAR COVER: <50% BASAL AREA: <15% Photosynthetic area very low. Very little plant cover to slow or stop runoff.	FOLIAR COVER: 50 to 70% BASAL AREA: 15 TO 25% Photosynthetic area low. Low retardation to runoff by pasture vegetation.	FOLIAR COVER: 70 to 90% BASAL AREA: 25 TO 35% Most forage plants grazed close; little leaf area to intercept sunlight. Moderate retardation to runoff by pasture vegetation.	FOLIAR COVER: 90 to 95% BASAL AREA: 35 TO 50% Pasture not uniformly grazed and there is some loss of potential for photosynthetic activity. Pasture vegetation offers high retardation to runoff.	FOLIAR COVER: 95 to >100% BASAL AREA: >50% Forages maintained in leafy condition for best photosynthetic activity. Very dense stand with either no runoff, or very slow runoff flows.		1.5	
Plant Diversity (Evaluate as a complete system. Functional groups of forages are plant groupings that have similar growth habits and management needs). / 10%	One dominant perennial forage species (>75% of stand by air-dry weight). or, More than 5 forage species (each <20% of stand) all of one functional group. Uneven grazing use. Grazing use poorly distributed.	Two to five forage species all of one functional group (>75% of stand by air-dry weight). At least one perennial forage species avoided by livestock resulting in presence of mature seedstalks and uneven grazing use. Forage species occur in patches, and are not intermixed.	Two to three forage species all of one functional group (each at least 20% of stand by air-dry weight). Forage species intermixed, have compatible growth habits, similar re-growth periods, and have comparable palatability. No forage plants ungrazed.	Two to four forage species representing two functional groups (each at least 20% of stand by air-dry weight) – at least one perennial grass and one perennial legume species are present. Forage species well intermixed, have compatible growth habits, similar re-growth periods, and comparable palatability. No forage plants ungrazed.	Three to five forage species representing at least three functional groups (each ±20% of stand by air-dry weight) – at least one grass and one legume species are present. Forage species well intermixed, have compatible growth habits, similar re-growth periods, and have comparable palatability. No forage plants ungrazed.		1.0	
Plant residue (organic material covering soil between tillers or stems) / 3%	Ground Cover: No identifiable residue present on soil surface. Thatch, if present, is heavy (>1-inch thick). STANDING-DEAD FORAGE: More than 25% of total pasture production (air-dry weight).	Ground Cover: <10% of soil surface with dead forage plant residue present. Thatch, if present, 0.5" to 1" thick. STANDING-DEAD FORAGE: 5 to 25% of total pasture production (air-dry weight).	Ground Cover: 10 to 20% of soil surface with dead forage plant residue present. Thatch buildup, if present, less than 0.50" thick. STANDING-DEAD FORAGE: 5 to 15% of total pasture production (air-dry weight).	Ground Cover: 20 to 30% of soil surface with dead forage plant residue present. No thatch buildup. STANDING-DEAD FORAGE: Less than 5% of total pasture production (air-dry weight).	Ground Cover: 30 to 70% of soil surface covered with dead forage plant residue. No thatch buildup. STANDING-DEAD FORAGE: No standing dead forage plant material available to grazing animals.		0.3	
Plant Vigor / 20%	No recovery after grazing: or leaves pale yellow to brown: or plants at permanent wilting point: or most all plants evidence stress due to insects and/or disease. Exercise paddock only. Or, lodged, dark green, overly lush, forage that is generally avoided.	Recovery after grazing takes 2 or more weeks longer than normal: or yellowish-green leaves: or major insect or disease loss: or plants wilted most of day. Productivity 50 to <70% of listed potential for Forage Suitability Group.	Recovery after grazing takes 1 week longer than normal: or urine or dung patches dark green in contrast to rest of plants: or minor insect or disease loss: or plants wilted only during mid-day. Pasture productivity 70 to 85% of potential listed for Forage Suitability	Recovery after grazing takes 1 or 2 days longer than normal: or light-green leaves of most plants as contrasted to greener plants in urine and dung patches: or minor insect or disease damage. No plant willing. Productivity of stand near potential listed for Forage Suitability Group.	Rapid recovery following grazing. Healthy green color of foliage. No sign of insect or disease damage. No leaf wilting. Yields at listed potential for species adapted to the Forage Suitability Group.		2.0	

Percent legume (Cool season stands. See footnote 3 of national score sheet for warm season.) / 5%	No legume in pasture; or, more than 60% (air-dry weight) of bloat-causing legumes.	Forage legumes less than 15% (air-dry weight); or, 45% to 60% (air-dry weight) of spreading legume with grass composition declining.	Forage legumes represent 15% to <25% (air-dry weight) of pasture production.	Forage legumes represent 25% to <35% (air-dry weight) of pasture production.	Forage legumes represent 35% to 45% (air-dry weight) of pasture production. No forage grass loss; forage grasses may be increasing.		0.5	
Uniformity of Use / 7%	Little-grazed patches cover over 50% of pasture. Mosaic pattern of grazing use; or there are identifiable areas within pasture being avoided.	Little-grazed patches cover over 25 to 50% of pasture either in a mosaic pattern or as identifiable areas within pasture that are not frequented.	Little-grazed patches cover 10 to 25% of pasture either in a mosaic pattern or as identifiable areas within pasture that are not frequented.	Little-grazed patches represent minor spots where one to several forage plant are not grazed. Urine and dung patches avoided.	Ungrazed areas only at urine or dung patches. No ungrazed forage species.		0.7	
Livestock Concentration Areas / 10%	Livestock concentration areas and trails cover >10% of the pasture; or all concentration areas allow for contaminated runoff to be conveyed directly into adjacent water bodies.	Livestock concentration areas and trails cover 5 to 10% of the pasture; most concentration areas are close to water channels allowing contaminated (unbuffered) runoff to drain into adjacent water bodies.	Isolated livestock concentration areas and trailing evident (<5% of pasture); no more than one concentration area that drains (unbuffered) directly into adjacent water body.	Some livestock trailing evident with one or two, small, concentration areas. There is a buffer zone between any concentration area and adjacent water bodies.	Absence of livestock concentration areas and trailing: Or, heavy use areas located or treated to minimize contaminated runoff.		1.0	
Soil Compaction (Probe moist soil comparing the treatment unit to an ungrazed area; i.e. fence row.) / 5%	Infiltration capacity and surface runoff severely affected by compaction. Livestock traffic is eradicating pasture plants over large areas. Very hard to push a probe into soil without damage to probe.	Infiltration capacity reduced due to large areas of bare ground and dense compaction layer at surface. Livestock trails common. Off-trail hoof prints common. Hard to push a probe through soil layers.	Infiltration capacity lowered and surface runoff increased due to plant cover loss and soil compaction by livestock traffic. Soil resistant to soil probe entry at one or more depths within plow depth.	Infiltration capacity lowered and surface runoff increased due to reduced plant cover. Soil probe enters soil easily. Scattered signs of livestock trails and hoof prints with impact confined to lanes or small wet areas.	Infiltration capacity and surface runoff are similar to that expected for an ungrazed meadow or pasture not impacted by livestock traffic.		0.5	
Erosion (Including irrigation induced) / 15%	Large bare areas with active sheet & rill erosional features represent more than 20% of pasture. Enlarged (deepened or widened) corrugates or center pivot wheel tracks: >50% of corrugate lengths are eroded; sediment deposition evident within the pasture; irrigation tailwater/runoff with visible sediment load.	Bare areas with active sheet & rill erosion less than 20% of pasture. >50% of corrugate lengths are eroded; active erosion at turnouts from water conveyances, near sprinkler heads; or center pivot wheel tracks; irrigation tailwater has visible sediment load; large-sized debris off the pasture accumulates at bottom of field.	Active sheet & rill erosion represents no more than 5% of pasture with most erosion limited to sites adjacent to irrigation system components (i.e., turnouts, sprinkler heads, center pivot tracks); <50% of corrugate lengths are eroded; irrigation tailwater or runoff with little visible sediment load; some plant litter collects at bottom of field.	No visible evidence of active erosion; some evidence of past erosion but features are blunted and now vegetated; debris dams formed by litter, if present, are random and scattered over pasture area.	No evidence of past or current erosion due to irrigation within pasture.		1.5	
Overall Pasture Condition Score	Individual Indicator Score	Management Change Suggested			Overall Pasture Condition Score =			
45 to 50	5	No changes in management needed at this time.						
35 to 45	4	Minor changes would enhance, do most beneficial first.						
25 to 35	3	Improvements would benefit productivity and/or environment.						
15 to 25	2	Needs immediate management changes, high return likely.						
10 to 15	1	Major effort required in time, management and expense.						
Species Present								
Grass			Forbs			Other		