

**INDIANA
Pasture Condition Score Sheet
(PCS)**

Cooperator					Date				
Conservationist					Pasture number				
Forage Suitability Group(s)									
Current Years Precipitation (check one)		Above Normal <input type="checkbox"/>	Normal <input type="checkbox"/>	Below Normal <input type="checkbox"/>					
<p>Evaluate the site and rate each indicator based upon your observations. Scores for each indicator may range from 1 to 5. Sum the indicator scores to determine overall pasture condition score.</p>								Score	
Indicator	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points	Pts	Wt.	Wtd. Pts.	
Desirable Plant Population (Evaluate as a complete system.) 10%	Undesirable weeds and/or encroaching woody species are dominant. Shade may be a factor. <3 forage species present being <20% of stand.	Mostly undesirable weeds and/or encroaching woody species present and expanding. Shade may be a factor. <3 forage species present being 20-40% of stand.	Undesirable broadleaves and annual weedy grasses invading. Some woody species encroaching. 3 or more desirable species being 40-60% of stand and some annuals being utilized to extend the season or for the summer slump period.	Dominantly desirable forage species. Remainder mostly intermediates and a few undesirables are present. 3 or more desirable cool season species present and some warm season grasses managed separately. Desirable species 60-80% of stand.	Dominantly desirable species with the remainder being scattered intermediate utilized species. 3 or more desirable cool season species present and 10% or more of the system in perennial warm season grasses and managed separately. Desirable species >=80% of stand.	1			
Live Plant Density 10%	Photosynthetic area is very low due to thin stands. Very little plant cover to slow or stop runoff. Bare soil is easily seen.	Photosynthetic area is low. Runoff is fast due to low plant cover. Some bare soil visible.	Most forages are grazed close, with little leaf area to intercept sunlight. Runoff is moderate due to moderate plant cover. Very little bare soil present.	Spot grazed so there is some loss of photosynthetic potential. Runoff is low due to good plant cover. No bare soil present. Some dead plant material present.	Forages are maintained mainly in leafy condition for best photosynthetic activity. Stands are very thick with slow or no runoff flows. No bare soil present with OM on surface. Very few weeds or forbs.	1			
Percent Legume 5%	No legumes are present or extremely sparse or a high percentage of bloating legumes (>50%) are present or competing too much with grass.	Very small amount of legumes present or bloating legumes (>50%) are starting to compete with grasses.	High percentage of legumes present by weight (40-50%). Some excess nitrogen possible. Lack of sufficient dry matter possible. (Cow patties more of a consistency of thin pea soup)	Moderate amount of legumes present by weight (20-30%).	Adequate amount of legumes present by weight (30-40%). (Cow patties are pudding consistency)	0.5			
Plant Residue (Ground cover, standing dead forage or thatch) 10%	No residue is present. Bare soil is easily seen.	Very little ground is covered with dead leaves or stems. Some bare soil visible.	Some ground is covered with dead leaves or stems. Some dead upright forage present. Very little bare soil present.	Most ground is covered with dead leaves or stems. Some dead upright forage present. No bare soil present.	Majority of ground is covered with dead leaves or stems. Some dead upright forage present. No bare soil present.	1			
Plant Vigor 15%	More than 80% of plants are pale yellowish green, or plants are suppressed from continuous grazing. Invasive or poor quality species replacing desirables. Fertility appears to be lacking in one or more nutrients. There is no recovery after grazing.	50% to 80% of plants have yellowish green leaves. Fertility appears to be very lacking in one or more nutrients. Recovery after grazing takes 2 or more weeks longer than normal (Would make your normal lawn growth mid summer look really good).	Urine/dung patches are dark green in contrast to rest of plants. Fertility appears fairly good. Recovery after grazing takes 1 week longer than normal (Your lawn grows faster).	50 to 80 % of plants are of healthy green color for the crop. Fertility appears to pretty good. Recovery after grazing takes 1 to 2 days longer than normal (About as fast as a well fertilized lawn).	More than 80% of the plants are of healthy green color for the crop. Desirable plants competitive with invading species. Fertility appears to be adequate. Rapid recovery after grazing (As fast as your lawn in the spring).	1.5			

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Soil Health 5%	No earthworms or casting found. No dung beetles found. Manure piles not breaking down. Arthropods rarely seen. Soil is light in color, obviously is low in organic matter, and appears platy and or has a sour, metallic, or ammonia like smell.	Occasional casting or earthworm seen. No dung beetles found. Some breakdown of manure piles present. Arthropods seen with some searching. Soil is lighter in color appears lower in organic matter, platy and or has some smell of being sour, metallic, or of ammonia.	1-2 earthworms or castings found per sq. ft. Dung beetles found. Breakdown of manure piles present. Arthropods not hard to find. Soil is average in color due to organic matter content and has more of a pleasant "earthy" smell.	3-5 earthworms or castings found per sq. ft. Dung beetles easily found. Breakdown of manure piles within a week. Arthropods easily seen. Soil is darker in color and has more of a pleasant "earthy" smell.	6+ earthworms or castings found per sq. ft. Dung beetles abundant. Breakdown of manure piles within a few days. Arthropods abundant, no problem seeing. Soil is dark and loose and has a good "earthy" smell with lots of open pores.			0.5
Uniformity & Severity of use 15%	Over 50% of the pasture avoided or severely overgrazed. Little or no rest provided to pasture.	30-50% of the pasture is avoided or overgrazed. Insufficient rest provided.	20-30% of the pasture is avoided or overgrazed. Some timely rest is provided to pasture.	Only 10-20% of the pasture is avoided or overgrazed. Adequate rest periods provided to pasture.	Less than 10% of the pasture is avoided or overgrazed. Adequate to long rest periods provided to pasture.			1.5
Livestock concentration areas 10%	Livestock concentration areas and trails cover >10% of the pasture. Concentrated areas convey contaminated runoff directly into water bodies.	Livestock concentration areas and trails cover 5-10% of pasture. Most close to water bodies and drain into them unbuffered.	Isolated livestock concentrated areas and trails cover 5-10% of area.	Some livestock trails and one or two small concentration areas cover <5% of the pasture. Buffer areas are between concentrated areas and water bodies.	No untreated livestock concentration areas in the pasture. (Ex. Gravel pad around waterers, possibly at gates, no evidence of trails in pasture). Buffers where needed.			1
Soil compaction (Probe moist soil comparing the treatment unit to an ungrazed area [i.e. fence row]. Estimate compaction when soil is not moist.) 10%	Unable to push survey flag into soil. Red penetrometer reading. Infiltration capacity and surface runoff severely affected by heavy compaction. Excessive livestock traffic killing plants over wide areas.	Hard to push survey flag past compacted layers. Almost red penetrometer reading. Infiltration capacity is lowered and surface runoff increased due to large areas of bare ground and dense compaction layer at surface.	Soil resistant to survey flag at one or more depths within soil depth. Between yellow and red penetrometer reading. Infiltration capacity lowered and surface runoff increased due to plant cover loss and soil compaction by livestock hooves.	Survey flag enters soil easily except at rocks. Yellow to almost green penetrometer reading. There are scattered signs of livestock trails and hoof prints, confined to lanes or small, wet areas.	Survey flag pushes easily into ground except for rocks. Dominantly green penetrometer readings. Soil is friable, infiltration of water is obviously good (little runoff in structures, streams).			1
Erosion (Utilize SVAP2 if streambanks are primary concern) 10%	Erosion is active throughout pasture. Active gullies are present caused by livestock trailing. Sheet and rill erosion is apparent. Stream banks are unstable and active erosion present.	Most erosion is confined to steepest terrain of unit. Trails are evident causing concentrated flows. Stream banks are unstable and some active erosion present.	Most erosion is confined to heavy use areas, especially in loafing areas, concentration area, and water sites. Livestock trailing is evident. Stream banks are somewhat unstable and minor erosion present.	No current formation of rills. There is some evidence of past rill formation, but they are grassed. Stream banks are moderately stable. Grazing is not negatively impacting condition due to management.	No evidence of current or past formation of sheet flow or rills. Stream banks are stable and well protected and treated as a sensitive area either by exclusion or well managed for grazing.			1

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.	

Comments/Notes