

Midwest Pasture Condition Scoresheet - Standard for Cool Season Grass/Legume Mixed Pasture 30-45" PZ

Cooperator				Date	
Conservationist				Pasture number(s)	
Forage Suitability Group(s)					
Current Years Precipitation (check one)	Above Normal <input type="checkbox"/>	Normal <input type="checkbox"/>	Below Normal <input type="checkbox"/>		

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 weighted points to determine overall CSP pasture condition score.

Indicator/Weight	1 Points	2 Point	3 Points	4 Point	5 Points	Points	Wt.	Wtd. Pts.
Percent Desirable Plants / 10%	Desirable species <20% of stand. Annual weeds and/or woody invasives are dominant.	Desirable species 20-40% of stand. Mostly weedy annuals and/or woody invasives present and expanding. Shade is a factor.	Desirable species 40-60% of stand. Undesirable broadleaf weeds and annual weedy grasses invading. Some woody species invading.	Desirable forage species 60-80% of stand. Remainder mostly intermediates and a few undesirables are present.	Desirable species exceed 80% of plant community with the remainder being scattered intermediates.		1.0	
Live Plant Cover (Live stems and green leaf cover of all species at adjusted 3-4" height.) / 15%	Canopy: <50% Photosynthetic area is very low. Very little plant cover to slow or stop runoff.	Canopy: 50-70% Photosynthetic area is low. Runoff is fast due to low plant cover.	Canopy: 70-80% Most forages are grazed close, with little leaf area to intercept sunlight. Runoff is moderate due to moderate plant cover.	Canopy: 80-90% Spot grazed so there is some loss of photosynthetic potential. Runoff is low due to good plant cover.	Canopy: 90% Forages are maintained in leafy condition for best photosynthetic activity. Stands are very thick stand with slow or no runoff flows.		1.5	
Plant Diversity (Evaluate as a complete system.) / 10%	More than one dominant (>75% of DM wt.) forage species from one functional group with differing growth habits. Not evenly grazed - poorly distributed. (ex: jointed grasses and non-jointed grasses)	One dominant (>75% of DM wt.) forage species. Or, over 5 forage species (all <20%) from one dominant functional group, not evenly grazed - poorly distributed.	Two to five forage species from one dominant functional (>75% of DM wt.) group. At least one avoided by livestock permitting presence of mature seed stalks. Species in patches.	Three forage species (each 20% DM wt.) from one functional group. None avoided. Or, one forage species each from two functional groups, both supply 25-50% of DM wt.	Three to four forage species with at least one being a legume (each 20% of DM wt. and total >75% of DM wt.). Well intermixed, compatible growth habit, and comparable palatability		1.0	
Plant Residue / 5%	Ground cover: <1% No identifiable residue is present on soil surface. Or, heavy thatch is evident (>1 inch).	Ground cover: 1-10% is covered with dead leaves or stems. Or, thatch is 0.5 inch to 1 inch thick.	Ground cover: 10-20% is covered with dead leaves or stems. Or, there is slight thatch buildup but <0.5 inch.	Ground cover: 20-30% is covered with dead leaves or stems but there is no thatch present.	Ground cover: 30-70% is covered with dead leaves or stems, but there is no thatch buildup.		0.5	
Plant Vigor / 15%	There is no recovery after grazing. More than 80% of plants are pale yellow or brown, or permanently wilted or lost due to insects or disease. Yields are regularly more than 30% below site potential; or there is lodged, dark green overly lush forage, often avoided by grazers.	Recovery after grazing takes 2 or more weeks longer than normal, or 50% to 80% of plants are yellowish green leaves, or there is major insect or disease yield loss, or plants are wilted most of day. Productivity is very low, 20-30% below site potential.	Recovery after grazing takes 1 week longer than normal, or the urine/dung patches are dark green in contrast to rest of plants, or there is minor insect or disease loss or mid-day plant wilting. Yields are regularly 10-20% below site potential.	Recovery after grazing takes 1 to 2 days longer than normal; 50 to 80 % of plants are of healthy green color for the crop. There is minor insect or disease damage. No plants are wilting. Yields are near site potential.	Rapid recovery after grazing. More than 80% of the plants are of healthy green color for the crop. No signs of insect or disease damage. No leaf wilting. Yields are at site potential for the species adapted to the site's soil and climate. Desirable plants competitive with invading species.		1.5	
Percent Legume / 5%	Legumes are <10% by wt. Or, greater than 60% bloating legumes.	Legumes are <10% by wt. Or, 40-60% spreading legume with grass loss occurring.	10-19% legumes.	20-29% legumes.	30 - 60 % legumes by weight.		0.5	
Uniformity of Use / 5%	Over 50% of the pasture. Mosaic pattern found throughout pasture or identifiable areas of pasture avoided.	No more than 30-50 % of the pasture spot grazed either in a mosaic pattern or obvious portion is not frequented. Urine and dung patches are avoided.	No more than 20-30 % of the pasture spot grazed either in a mosaic pattern or obvious portion is not frequented. Urine and dung patches are avoided.	No more than 10-20 % of the pasture spot grazed. Urine and dung patches are avoided.	No more than 10 % of the pasture spot grazed. 90% of the pasture falls within the minimum and maximum grazing heights for cool season grass/legume mixtures (3 - 8").		0.5	
Livestock Concentration Areas / 10%	Cover >10% of the pasture; or concentrated areas convey contaminated runoff directly into water channels.	Livestock conc. areas and trails cover 5-10% of pasture; most close to water channels 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 channels.	No untreated livestock concentration areas in the pasture. (Ex. Gravel pad around waterers, possibly at gates, no evidence of trails in pasture).		1.0	
Soil Compaction / 10%	Unable to push survey flag into soil. 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. 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. 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. 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. Soil is friable, earthworm and dung beetle activity should be evident, especially around manure piles.		1.0	
Erosion / 15%	Erosion is active throughout pasture; rills are 3-8 inches deep at close intervals and/or grazing terraces are close-spaced with some slope slippage. Active gullies are present caused by livestock trailing. Pediceling is apparent.	Most erosion is confined to steepest terrain of unit; well defined rills are 0.5-3 inches deep at close intervals and/or grazing terraces are present. Trails are evident causing concentrated flows.	Most erosion is confined to heavy use areas, especially in loafing areas, concentration area, and water sites; rills are 0.5-3 inches deep. Debris fans are found at downslope edge. Livestock trailing is evident.	No current formation of rills. There is some evidence of past rill formation, but they are grassed. Scattered debris dams of litter are occasionally present.	No evidence of current or past formation of sheet flow or rills.		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.						

Comments/Notes	