Pasture Condition Score Sheet

Operator:				**Date:**	
Evaluator:				**Pasture ID:**	
Soil(s), ESD(s) and or FSG(s):				**Livestock type:**	
Current Season's Precipitation (check one)	Above Normal ☐	Normal ☐	Below Normal ☐		
Seasonal Temperature Trend (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. Sum the indicator scores to determine overall pasture condition score.

Indicator	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points	Score Points
Percent Desirable Plants* (Dry Weight; for Livestock Type)	Desirable species <20% of stand.	Desirable species 20 – 40% of stand.	Desirable species 41 – 60% of stand.	Desirable species 61 – 80% of stand.	Desirable species exceed 80% of stand.	
Percent Legume by Dry Weight	<5% **OR** >50% bloating legumes.	5-10% legumes **OR** >40% bloating legume.	11-20% legumes.	21-30% legumes.	31-40% legumes. No grass loss; grass may be increasing.	
Live (includes dormant) Plant Cover	Less than 40% is live leaf canopy. Remaining is either dead standing material, or bare ground.	40-65% is live leaf canopy. Remaining is either dead standing material, or bare ground.	66-80% live leaf canopy. Remaining is either dead standing material, or bare ground.	81-95% live leaf canopy. Remaining is either dead standing material, or bare ground.	More than 95% live (non-dormant) leaf canopy. Remaining is either dead standing material, or bare ground.	
Plant Diversity by Dry Weight (*See footnote at bottom of page)	**Diversity:** Very low	**Diversity**: Low	**Diversity:** Moderate	**Diversity:** High	**Diversity:** Very high	
	<50% desirable species **OR** 1 dominant desirable species in 1 functional group **OR** No dominant desirable species and all minor species in each functional group totaling <15%	2 dominant desirable species in 1 functional group **OR** 2 functional groups each represented by minor species totaling ≥15%	3 dominant desirable species in 1 functional group **OR** 2-3 dominant desirable species in 2 functional groups **OR** 3 functional groups each represented by minor species totaling ≥15%	4 dominant desirable species in 2 functional groups **OR** 3 dominant desirable species in 3 functional groups **OR** 3 dominant desirable species in 2 functional groups **AND** 1 additional functional group represented by minor species totaling ≥15%	4 dominant desirable species in 3 functional groups **OR** 4 dominant desirable species in 2 functional groups **AND** 1 additional functional group represented by minor species totaling ≥15%	
Plant Residue and Litter as Soil Cover (*Pull back canopy*)	Bare soil is very easily seen;	Openings of bare soil can be seen fairly easily;	Small openings of bare soil can be seen, but minimal;	No bare soil is easily seen;	No bare soil is seen;	
	There is <20% cover on the soil surface or it is excessive, and slow to break down.	Soil cover is 21-40%.	Soil cover is 41-60%.	Soil cover is 61-80%.	Soil cover is >80% with good biological activity and decomposition of older residue.	
Grazing Utilization and Severity	Pasture is overgrazed throughout.	Pasture consists primarily of overgrazed and/or refused areas (former dung areas, older plants, undesired plants).	Pastures show uneven grazing throughout with heavier grazing near water or feeding areas, or distinct zone grazing.	Pasture grazed evenly throughout with minimal overgrazing with some under grazed small areas and heavier use near water sources.	Pasture grazed evenly throughout with no overgrazing.	

*Use NRCS plant list for livestock species. Functional groups are as appropriate for your state (cool-season grasses, legumes, warm-season grasses, non-leguminous forbs). Any time there are more undesirables than desirables, it will be 1 point. Desirable species must total more than 50% of the total biomass. Dominant species are ≥15%. Functional groups must be ≥15% of stand to be counted.

Indicator	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points	Points
Livestock Concentration Areas (If field <1 acre, see ** footnote)	Livestock concentration areas are within 100 feet of, or are a direct conveyance to surface water, and cover more than 0.1 acre, including trails.	Livestock concentration areas are within 100 feet of, or are a direct conveyance to surface water, and cover less than 0.1 acre, including trails.	Livestock concentration areas are farther than 100 feet from and are not a direct conveyance to surface water, and cover more than 0.1 acre, including trails.	Livestock concentration areas are farther than 100 feet and are not a direct conveyance to surface water, and cover less than 0.1 acre, including trails.	Livestock concentration areas, including trails, not present.	
Soil Compaction and Soil Regenerative Features (***See footnote at bottom of page)	**Compaction:** Dense or thick platy layer very distinct;	**Compaction:** Dense or moderate platy layer noticeable;	**Compaction:** Thin dense or platy layer still present;	**Compaction:** Minor dense or platy layer; good aggregates common (crumbly soil);	**Compaction:** No dense or platy layers; crumbly soil throughout;	
	Roots: Dominantly horizontal; most shallow/sparse;	**Roots:** Numerous horizontal; moderate amount shallow/sparse;	**Roots:** Some horizontal with increasing downward;	**Roots:** Few horizontal, more downward through the soil profile;	**Roots:** Abundant growth primarily downward through the soil profile;	
	Color: Surface horizon same as subsoil;		**Color:** Surface horizon moderately darker than subsoil;		**Color:** Surface horizon dramatically darker than subsoil;	
	Soil Life: Few or no signs.	**Soil Life:** Signs scattered in surface layer.	**Soil Life:** Signs scattered throughout.	**Soil Life:** Signs numerous throughout.	**Soil Life:** Signs abundant throughout.	
Plant Vigor	No plant recovery after grazing/harvest. Pale, yellow or brown, or severe stunting of desirable forage.	Some recovery. Yellowish green forage, or moderately or slight stunting of desirable forage.	Adequate recovery of desirable forage. Yellowish and dark green areas due to manure and urine patches.	Good recovery of desirable forage. Light green and dark green forage present.	Rapid recovery of desirable forage. All healthy green forage.	
Erosion (Circle all that apply; the overall indicator score will be the lowest rating indicated)	**Sheet and Rill:** Plant density is insufficient to stop runoff, with poor infiltration. Erosion easily visible throughout pasture;	**Sheet and Rill:** Plant density slows runoff. Erosion present and easily seen on steeper terrain;	**Sheet and Rill:** Plant density good and runoff moderate. If present, erosion concentrated on heavily used areas;	**Sheet and Rill:** Plant density high, runoff low, good infiltration. May have evidence of past erosion if present;	**Sheet and Rill:** Plant density high, no runoff, good infiltration. No evidence of present or past erosion;	
	Wind: Severe scoured areas and deposition throughout;	**Wind:** Scoured areas common, deposition effecting plants;	**Wind:** Occasional scoured areas, litter windrolled;	**Wind:** Minimal soil exposed, some detatched vegetation windrolled, minor plant damage;	**Wind:** No exposed soil;	
	Streambank and/or Shoreline: Banks bare, major sloughing, no bank vegetation;	**Streambank and/or Shoreline:** More than half the bank vegetation trampled; sloughing.	**Streambank and/or Shoreline:** Less than half the bank vegetation trampled; eroding at crossing/entrances.	**Streambank and/or Shoreline:** Eroding at crossings, entrances; all the bank vegetation is intact and banks are stable.	**Streambank and/or Shoreline: V**egetation intact and stable, hardened crossings and alternative water sources used;	
	Gully: Very large mass movement, caving sides.	**Gully:** Advancing upslope, increasing fingering extensions.	**Gully:** Not all active but extensions present.	**Gully:** Stable with vegetative cover.	**Gully:** None, drainage ways vegetative.	

** If field size is less than 1 ac. Use 10% of field size in place of 0.1 acre. ***Use a shovel. Root and Compaction subindicators are primary and should be considered first. Soil color and soil life are secondary subindicators which can be considered where applicable.

Overall Pasture Condition Score	Individual Indicator Score	Management Change Suggested
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.

Overall Pasture Condition Score =

Comments/Notes: