

Louisiana - Southeast Pasture Condition Scoresheet - Standard for Grass/Legume Mixed Pasture

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. Score 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 pasture condition score								
Indicator/Weight	1 Point	2 Points	3 Points	4 Points	5 Points	Points	Wt.	Wtd. Pts.
<b>1. Percent Desirable Plants / 10%</b>	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.	40-60% desirable forage species. Undesirable broadleaf weeds and annual weedy grasses invading. Some woody species invading.	60-80% of plant community are desirable species. Remainder mostly intermediate and a few undesirables are present	Desirable species exceed 80% of plant community with scattered intermediates. No undesirables present		1.0	
<b>2. Live Plant Cover (Desired and Intermediate Species Only) / 15%</b>	Canopy <50% Photosynthetic area is 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 70-90% Most forages are grazed close, with little leaf area to intercept sunlight. Runoff is moderate due to moderate plant cover	Canopy 90-95% Spot grazed so there is some loss of photosynthetic potential. Runoff is low due to good plant cover.	Canopy 95-100% forages are maintained in leafy condition for best photosynthetic activity. Stands are very thick stand with slow or no runoff flows.		1.5	
<b>3. Plant Diversity (Desired and Intermediate Species Only) / 10%</b>	One dominant (>75% of DM wt.) forage species is present. Or, over 5 forage species are present (all<20%) from one dominant functional group, not evenly grazed - poorly distributed	Two to five forage species are present from one dominant functional group (>75% of DM wt.). At least one avoided by livestock so displays mature seedstalks. Species in patches.	Three forage species are present (each ≥ 20% of DM wt.) from one functional group. None are avoided. Or, one forage species each from two functional groups, both supply 25-50% of DM wt.	Three to four forage species are present (each ≥ 20% of DM wt.) with at least one being a legume. Well intermixed, compatible growth habit, and comparable palatability.	Four to Five forage species representing three functional groups (each ± 20% of DM wt.) with at least one being a native grass (switchgrass, eastern gamagrass, indiagrass, big bluestem or little bluestem).		1.0	
<b>4. Plant Residue (not species dependent) / 3%</b>	Ground cover: No dead leaves or stems 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: There is 20-30% 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.		0.3	
<b>5. Plant Vigor (Desirable and Intermediate Species)/ 20%</b>	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 50-80% 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, 50-80% of plants appear turgid and of natural green for the crop, or 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 appear turgid and of natural green color for the crop. There are no signs of insect or disease damage. There is no leaf wilting. Yields are near the potential for the species, adapted to the site's soil and climate. Desirable plants appear very competitive with invading species.		2.0	

<b>6. Percent Legume (Warm Season Stands) / 5%</b>	<4% legumes	5-9% legumes	10-19% legumes	20-29% legumes	30-40% legumes		0.5	
<b>7. Uniformity of Use / 7%</b>	Little grazed patches cover over 50% of the pasture. Mosaic pattern found throughout pasture or identifiable areas of pasture avoided.	Little grazed patches cover 30-50% of the pasture either in a mosaic pattern or obvious portion is not frequented.	Little grazed patches cover 20-30% of the pasture either in a mosaic pattern or obvious portion is not frequented.	Little grazed patches or minor spots cover 10-20% of the pasture where isolated forage species are rejected. Urine and dung patches are avoided.	Rejected areas cover 10% or less of the pasture only at urine and dung patches.		0.7	
<b>8. Livestock Concentration Areas / 10%</b>	Cover >10% of the pasture; or all 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 conc. areas and trails cover 3-5% of area; one close to water channel and drains into it unbuffered.	Some livestock trails and one or two small concentration areas cover <3% of the pasture. Buffer areas are between them and water channels.	No presence of livestock concentration areas. Areas are well sited, or treated to minimize contaminated runoff.		1.0	
<b>9. Soil Compaction (Use 1/2 tip on penetrometer) / 5%</b>	Use 1/2 inch tip on penetrometer. Penetrometer reading of >300 psi	Use 1/2 inch tip on penetrometer. Penetrometer reading of 250-300	Use 1/2 tip on penetrometer. Penetrometer reading of 200-250.	Use 1/2 tip on penetrometer. Penetrometer reading of 150-200 psi.	Use 1/2 tip on penetrometer. Penetrometer reading of <150		0.5	
<b>10. Erosion / 15%</b>	Sheet and rill erosion is active throughout pasture; rills are 3-8 inches deep at close intervals and/or grazing terracettes are close-spaced with some slope slippage.	Most sheet and rill erosion is confined to steepest terrain of unit; well defined rills are 0.5-3 inches deep at close intervals and/or grazing terracettes are present.	Most sheet and rill erosion is confined to heavy use areas, especially in loafing areas and water sites; rills are 0.5-3 inches deep. Debris fans are found at downslope edge.	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	
<b>Overall Pasture Condition Score</b>	<b>Individual Indicator Score</b>	<b>Management Change Suggested</b>			<b>Overall Pasture Condition Score =</b>			
<b>46 to 50</b>	5	No changes in management needed at this time.						
<b>36 to 45</b>	4	Minor changes would enhance, do most beneficial first.						
<b>26 to 35</b>	3	Improvements would benefit productivity and/or environment						
<b>16 to 25</b>	2	Needs immediate management changes, high return likely						
<b>10 to 15</b>	1	Major effort required in time, management and expenses.						

Comments/Notes and Producer Signature	