

Pasture Condition Score Sheet Instructions

Pasture Condition Score Sheet

Purposes

- Evaluate current pasture productivity and the stability of its plant community, soil, and water resources.
- Identify what treatment needs, if any, are required to improve a pasture’s productivity and protect soil, water, and air quality.

Suggested uses

This score sheet may be used to rate different pastures in a single growing season or the same pasture over a period of years. Rating a pasture yearly can track trends, either improvement or decline, in its condition. Some indicators change slowly in response to stresses caused by management or climate. Also, some indicators may change as each season progresses. An indicator or causative factor may rank high at one time and low another. Uniformity of use, plant residue, percent legume, severity of use, weather, and insect or disease pressure can vary widely on the same pasture depending on when they are scored during the year and the degree of management the pasture receives.

Therefore, it is often wise to score a pasture at different, key times during the year before deciding to make changes in management. Indicate on the form the date the scoring occurred.

Procedure

Step 1 - Rate each pasture one by one that is occupied all at the same time by a herd or flock and separated from other pasture areas by portable or fixed fencing. Paddocks in rotational pastures may be rated separately or as a combined unit. It depends on how alike they are. If any indicator looks markedly different from paddock to paddock, it may pay to rate each one separately.

Step 2 - Score all 10 indicators regardless of your feelings of their relative worth.

Step 3 - Using the attached score sheet and indicator criteria, read the scoring criteria for each of the 10 pasture condition indicators one at a time and rate before moving onto the next. Use the 1 to 5 scale provided. Estimate by eye or measure as precisely as you feel is needed to rate the indicator reliably.

Step 4 - When scoring plant vigor, enter a score based on the general criteria. If the plant vigor score is less than 4, refer to the plant vigor causative factors' criteria on page 2 of the scoresheet to identify the plant stress(es) causing reduced vigor. Rate each causative factor independently. Do not average to adjust the original vigor score.

Step 5 - When scoring erosion, rate sheet and rill erosion every time. Rate other types of erosion only if present.

When present, indicate which one(s) by identifying the erosion type with a unique symbol next to its score. Divide the box as needed to score them separately. Erosion is rated by averaging the individual scores. A need remains to prioritize which erosion problem is controlled first and how.

Step 6—Total the score for each pasture and compare to the following chart. Also, focus on any low scoring individual indicators or causative factors.

Overall Pasture Condition Score	Individual Indicator Score	Management Change Suggested
Greater than 46	5	Few or no changes in management needed.
36 to 45	4	Minor changes in management would enhance resource and productivity concerns.
26 to 35	3	Improvements would significantly benefit resource conservation and productivity.
16 to 25	2	Significant management changes needed to address resource and productivity concerns.
10 to 15	1	Major effort required in time, management and expenses to address resource and productivity concerns.

Step 7 - When an individual indicator's score falls below a 5, determine its worth to your operation. Then, decide whether to correct the cause or causes for the low rating. If you choose to correct, apply the most suitable management options for your area and operation.

NRCS - GEORGIA - PASTURE CONDITION SCORE - PASTURE PLANTS - FUNCTIONAL GROUPS and DESIRABILITY

Desirable Species

Functional Group 1 Cool Season Grasses

Kentucky bluegrass
Orchardgrass
Red Top
Reed Canarygrass
Rescuegrass (also call Prairie grass) "Matua"
Ryegrass, annual and perennial
Smallgrains (barley, oats, rye, triticale, wheat)
Tall Fescue
Timothy

Functional Group 2 Warm Season Grasses

Bahiagrass
Bermudagrass, hybrid or improved seed type
Bluestem, Big
Bluestem, Little
Crabgrass
Dallisgrass
Eastern gamagrass
Indiangrass
Johnsongrass
Millet, Browntop
Millet, Foxtail
Millet, Pearl
Sorghum-sudangrass hybrids
Sudangrass
Switchgrass

Functional Group 3 Legumes

Alfalfa
Clover, Crimson
Clover, Red
Clover, Subterranean
Clover, White (ladino and intermediates)
Hairy vetch
Lespedeza, Kobe
Lespedeza, Korean
Lespedeza, Sericea
Vetch, Common
Vetch, Hairy

Functional Group 4 Forbs

Brassicac (i.e. Rape, Kale, Turnips)
Chicory

Less Desirable Species

Intermediate Grasses

Barnyardgrass
Bermudagrass, common
Carpetgrass
Cheatgrass
Signalgrass, broadleaf

Intermediate Legumes

Black Medic
Clover, Hop
Clover, Rabbitsfoot
Clover, White Dutch
Florida beggarweed
Kudzu

Intermediate Forbs

Chickweed
Dandelion

Undesirable Grasses/Sedges/Rushes

Broomsedge
Foxtail, (giant, green or yellow)
Goosegrass
Little barley
Japanese stiltgrass (*Microstegium vimineum*)
Nimblewill
Nutsedge
Purpletop (*Tridens flavus*)
Rushes, most types
Sweet vernalgrass
Velvetgrass

Undesirable Forbs

Buttercup
Cocklebur
Cypress weed (dogfennel)
Dock
Henbit
Horsenettle
Marestail
Perilla mint
Plantains
Spiny amaranth
Thistles, all types
White snakeroot

Georgia Pasture Condition Score Sheet

Farm Name:					Date:														
Indicators					Pasture Number / Identification (edit as needed)														
					1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
PERCENT DESIRABLE PLANTS																			
% of plant cover by weight that is desirable for domestic animals using the forage:																			
1 <20	2 20-40	3 40-60	4 60-80	5 >80															
Plant Cover - Percent live, leafy canopy cover of desirables and intermediates is:																			
1 <50	2 50-70	3 70-90	4 90-95	5 95-100															
PLANT DIVERSITY																			
The diversity of well-represented forage species by dry matter weight is:																			
1 1 dominant forage species: from one functional group; not uniformly grazed	2 2+ Species; from one functional group; different palatability, distributed in patches	3 3 + Species from one functional group; none avoided. Or two species each from different functional groups	4 3 + Species, 20% + Dm wt. ea from two functional groups with one being a legume	5 4 + Species, 20% Dm wt. ea from three functional groups. At least one legume. Intermixed well.															
PLANT RESIDUE (rate % cover and thatch thickness separately and average the scores)																			
Ground cover of organic residue between plants & thickness of thatch (inch):																			
1 0%; > 1"	2 1-10%; 0.5 to 1"	3 10-20%; <.5"	4 20-30%; none	5 30-70%; none															
PLANT VIGOR (level of potential recovery & production post graze)																			
Degree of plant stress which affects recovery: If score <4, score the factors on second page to determine reason for poor vigor. Note plant color for nitrogen deficiencies, insect damage, and drought stress as well.																			
1 No recovery after grazing. Productivity < 30% of potential	2 Slow-2+week lag. Productivity very low 30-50% of potential	3 Moderate recovery- 1 week lag. Productivity 50-75% potential	4 Rapid-1-2 day lag. Productivity 75% - 90% potential	5 Optimum-no lag. Productivity at site potential															
LEGUME CONTENT																			
Percentage of legume present as total dry weight (cool season pasture score values above and warm season pasture score values below):																			
1 <10% or >60%	2 10-19%	3 20-29%	4 30-39%	5 40-60%															
<4%	5-9%	10-19%	20-29%	30-40%															
UNIFORMITY OF GRAZING																			
Estimate the extent of area showing spot or patch grazing in the pasture:																			
1 >50% ungrazed	2 25-50% ungrazed	3 10-25% ungrazed	4 Few patches. Minor rejection	5 No patches only urine and dung patches ungrazed															
SEVERITY OF USE - Intensity and frequency of forage removal is:																			
1 Continuously below minimum height. Or ungrazed brush/weeds invading	2 Continuously to minimum height	3 To minimum height. Limited / Slow rotation of livestock	4 To minimum height. Frequency based on availability	5 Grazed above minimum height. Frequency based on availability															
LIVESTOCK CONCENTRATION AREAS																			
Presence of livestock concentration areas and proximity to surface water:																			
1 >10% and/or all drain directly to water	2 5-10% most near water no veg. buffer	3 <5% some near water no veg. buffer	4 Few areas. All with veg. buffer	5 None. Or all sited and treated to minimize impact. None near water with veg. buffer															
SOIL COMPACTION - Probe moist soil compared to an ungrazed area beneath fence																			
1 Very Severe	2 Severe	3 Moderate	4 Slight	5 None															
EROSION																			
Always score Sheet & rill. Score the following when present, gully, streambank, shoreline, wind																			
1 Very Severe	2 Severe	3 Moderate	4 Slight	5 None Visible															
PASTURE CONDITION SCORE, total for each field																			

FACTORS AFFECTING PLANT VIGOR, Used to identify causes of poor plant vigor (do not average these scores into previous page)	Pasture Number / Identification (edit as needed)														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

P & K Status of soil Phosphorus and potassium status of the soil is:															
1	2	3	4	5											
Near Zero or Imbalanced	Severely Limiting	Moderately Limiting	Slightly Limiting	Not Limiting											

N Status in plant tissue Nitrogen status of the plant tissue is:															
1	2	3	4	5											
Yellow-Brown	Yellow-Pale Green	Pale Green	Pale-Natural Green	Natural Green											

SOIL pH pH status of the soil for the upper 4" rooting zone best fits:															
1	2	3	4	5											
pH<4.5	pH=4.5-5.0	pH=5.1-5.5	pH=5.6-6.0	pH=6.0-7.3											

SITE ADAPTATION OF DESIRED SPECIES Long term climate and natural soil characteristics play major role in adaptation; rank site for desired species.															
1	2	3	4	5											
Very Poor	Poor	Good	Very Good	Excellent											

CLIMATIC STRESSES Degree of plant stress due to recent weather effects is:															
1	2	3	4	5											
Very Severe, dying	Severe, no night recovery	Moderate, mid-day stress	Slight wilt or discolor	None											

INSECTS & DISEASE PRESSURE Level of plant stress due to insect or disease pressure is:															
1	2	3	4	5											
Severe	Threshold	<Threshold	Slight	None											

Biological Activity Assessment (do not average these scores into previous scores)															
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EARTHWORM & DUNG BEETLE ACTIVITY This category is not an official part of PCS, but will help characterize pastures:															
1	2	3	4	5											
Poor		Medium		Good											

% Soil Organic Matter Record % soil organic matter values from soil tests if available (Purpose of this category is to set a monitoring baseline for future comparison as management changes):															

General management changes based on overall score for individual pasture or whole farm.															
Overall Pasture Condition Score	Individual Indicator Score				Management Change Suggested										
Greater than 46	5				Few or no changes in management needed to address resource and productivity concerns.										
36 to 45	4				Minor changes in management would enhance resource and productivity concerns.										
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16 to 25	2				Significant management changes needed to address resource and productivity concerns.										
10 to 15	1				Major effort required in time, management and expenses to address resource and productivity concerns.										

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Description of GA Pasture Condition Scores

Indicator	Score	Descriptor Range	Detailed Description of the Score
% Desirable Plants	1	<20%	Productive species desirable for animal use < 20 % of stand. Weedy annuals and/or brush species dominate.
	2	20-40%	Productive species desirable for animal use 20-40%stand. Mostly weedy annuals and/or brush species present and expanding.
	3	40-60%	Species desirable for animal use 40-60% stand. Undesireable broadleaf weeds and annual weedy grasses invading. Some brush species.
	4	60-80%	Species desirable for animal use 60-80% stand. Remainder mostly intermediates and a few undesirables present.
	5	>80%	Species desirable for animal use >80% stand. Scattered intermediates.
Plant Cover (Live stems and green leaf cover of all desirable and intermediate species)	1	<50%	Plant canopy cover by live stems and green leaves is < 50%; Very high potential for runoff. Photosynthetic leaf area very low.
	2	50-70%	Plant canopy cover by live stems and green leaves is 50-70%; Relatively high potential for runoff. Low photosynthetic potential.
	3	70-90%	Plant canopy cover by live stems and green leaves is 70-90%; Most forages grazed close; Moderate runoff potential. Moderate photosynthetic potential.
	4	90-95%	Plant canopy cover by live stems and green leaves is 90-95%; Some spot grazing;Very little runoff potential. Good photosynthetic potential.
	5	95-100%	Plant canopy cover by live stems and green leaves is >95-100%; Thick stand; Very slow or no runoff flows under normal rainfall intensities. Excellent photosynthetic potential.
Plant Diversity (By dry matter weight)	1	1 dominant forage species: from one functional group; not uniformly grazed	One dominant forage species making up > 75% of DM by wt. Species not uniformly grazed.
	2	2+ Species; from one functional group; different palatability, distributed in patches	Two + forage species making up more than 75% of DM by wt, all from one functional group. Un-even palatability resulting in uneven utilization and scattered patches of certain species. Species not mixed but are distributed in patches allowing for widespread avoidance or non-uniform selection by animals.
	3	3 + Species from one functional group; none avoided. Or two species each from different functional groups	3 + forage species (each 20% of DM wt.) from one functional group. All well utilized. Or, two forage species each from different functional group; both supply 25-50% of DM by wt.
	4	3 + Species, 20% Dm wt. ea from two functional groups with one being a legume	Three + forage species (each 20+% of DM wt.) from two functional groups with at least one being a legume. Well inter-mixed.
	5	4 + Species, 20% Dm wt. ea from three functional groups. At least one legume. Intermixed well	Four + forage species representing three functional groups (each making up 20+% of DM wt.) with at least one legume. Intermixed well.
Plant Residue (Ground cover of organic residue between plants & thickness of thatch)	1	0% Cover: > 1" thatch	No ground cover of soil surface between live plants by decaying vegetation, or thatch > 1" thick.
	2	1-10% Cover. 0.5 to 1" thick thatch	1 - 10% ground cover by vegetative organic litter in various stages of decay on soil surface between plants. Thatch 0.5 to 1" thick.
	3	10-20% Cover. < 0.5" thatch	10-20% ground cover by vegetative organic litter in various stages of decay on soil surface between plants. Thatch < 0.5".
	4	20-30% Cover. No thatch	20-30% ground cover by vegetative organic litter in various stages of decay on soil surface between plants. No thatch
	5	30-70% Cover. No thatch	>30% ground cover by vegetative organic litter in various stages of decay on soil surface between plants. No thatch

Indicator	Score	Descriptor Range	Detailed Description of the Score
Plant Vigor (Degree of stress which affects plant recovery. If <4, score the causative factors that help determine reason for poor vigor)	1	No recovery after grazing. Productivity < 30% of potential	Recovery following grazing very slow or negligible, even under favorable growing conditions. Plant leaves may be pale yellow or brown. Very few photosynthetically active leaves in canopy. Leaves may appear stressed from fertility, pests, climate or animal or insect damage. Canopy is not very competitive with undesirable species.
	2	Slow-2+week lag. Productivity very low 30-50% of potential	Recovery from grazing may take 2 or more weeks longer than normal under favorable growing conditions. Plant leaves may be yellowish green. Leaves may appear stressed from fertility, pests, climate or animal or insect damage. Productivity may be only 30-50% of site potential.
	3	Moderate recovery-1 week lag. Productivity 50-75% potential	Recovery following grazing may take 1 week longer than normal under favorable growing conditions. Plants may show minor signs of stress due to lack of fertility, climatic stress, competition from undesirable species, pests or animal damage. Plants appear reasonably healthy and photosynthetically active. Very noticeable color contrast between urine/dung patches and surrounding pasture. Productivity may be 50-75% of site potential.
	4	Rapid-1-2 day lag. Productivity 75% - 90% potential	Recovery following grazing may take 1-2 days longer than normal for healthy, vigorous plants growing under favorable conditions. 75-90% of plants appear to be turgid, have favorable color, with very minor stress from pests or fertility. Productivity is >75% of site potential.
	5	Optimum-no lag. Productivity at site potential	Recovery following grazing is very rapid. Plants appear healthy with the natural green color for the species and weather conditions. Species appear very competitive with invading species and adapted to the site's soil and climate. Productivity would match site potential.
Legume Content (Percentage of legume present as total dry weight. Note: Cool Season Pasture Scores / Warm Season Pasture Scores)	1	<10 or >60% / <4%	< 10% by wt. in the mixture or greater than 60%. Warm Season Pasture (WS) <4%
	2	10-19% / 5-9%	10 to 19% by wt. in the mixture of legumes. WS Pasture 5-9%
	3	20-29% / 10-19%	20 -29% by wt in the mixture of legumes. WS Pasture 10-19%
	4	30-39% / 20-29%	30-39% by wt legumes. WS Pasture 20-29%
	5	40-60% / 30-40%	40-60% by wt legumes. WS Pasture 30-40%
Uniformity of Grazing	1	>50% of area ungrazed	"Spot" grazing (ungrazed or slightly grazed areas) is evident on more than 50% of the pasture. Mosaic grazing pattern throughout or identifiable areas have been avoided.
	2	25-50% area ungrazed	"Spot" grazed patches cover 25-50% of the pasture either in a mosaic pattern or obvious portion of pasture not grazed very often.
	3	10-25% area ungrazed	"Spot" grazed patches cover 10-25% of the pasture either in a mosaic pattern or obvious portion is not grazed often.
	4	Few patches. Minor rejection	"Spot" grazed patches cover small percentage of pasture where isolated forage types or areas have been rejected. Most ungrazed areas are surrounding urine and dung spots.
	5	No Patches. Only urine and dung patches ungrazed	Very few forage species have been rejected. Ungrazed or under-grazed areas are directly related to urine and dung spots.
Severity of Use (intensity and frequency of forage removal)	1	Continuously below minimum height. Or ungrazed brush/weeds invading	All plants continuously grazed as close to the soil as possible and very little leaf area available. Generally less desirable species have survived this management. There is usually significant bare soil exposed. Or no grazing, resulting in thatch or accumulation of dead tissue or non desirable species invasion.
	2	Continuously to minimum height	Plants grazed to 2-3" often, resulting in thin stands and less desirable surviving plants. Pasture may resemble mown lawn look.
	3	To minimum height. Limited / Slow rotation of livestock	Spot Grazing Common. Some areas heavily utilized; Some areas not utilized. Pasture may have patches with mown lawn look. Limited / Slow rotation of livestock.
	4	To minimum height. Frequency based on availability	Forages are not grazed below the target height for respective species. Manager rotates livestock into area based on forage availability.
	5	Grazed above minimum height. Frequency based on availability	Forage species grazed above desired target height for respective species. Manager rotates livestock into area based on forage availability.
Livestock Concentration Areas (% cover of livestock concentration areas and proximity to surface water)	1	>10% and/or all drain directly to water	Livestock concentration areas cover >10% of the pasture; and/or all drain directly into water channels.
	2	5-10% and/or most near water no veg. buffer	Livestock concentration areas cover 5-10% of pasture; and/or most near water channels and drain into them unbuffered by vegetation.
	3	<5% and/or some near water no veg. buffer	Livestock concentration areas cover <5% of area; and/or some near water channels and drain into them unbuffered by vegetation.
	4	Few areas. All with veg. buffer	Some livestock trails and one or two small lounging sites present. Not near water channels. Drainage from these areas is filtered by good vegetative buffer.
	5	None. Or all sited and treated to minimize water quality impact. None near water. All with veg. buffer.	No presence of concentration areas or all are sited and treated to minimize water quality impacts. None near water. Drainage from all areas filtered by good vegetative buffer.

Indicator	Score	Descriptor Range	Detailed Description of the Score
Soil Compaction (Probe moist soil with pin flag compared to an ungrazed area (i.e. beneath fence))	1	Very Severe	Excessive traffic. Pushing a pin flag wire into upper 2 inches of soil is very difficult. Infiltration capacity and surface runoff is unsatisfactory.
	2	Severe	Livestock trails common throughout. Off trail hoof prints common. It is difficult to push pin flag wire past the upper 2-4 inches of soil.
	3	Moderate	Scattered signs of livestock trails and hoof prints, mainly confined to paths to water, shade or lounging areas. Resistance to pushing a pin flag wire below 4-8 inches into the soil.
	4	Slight	Scattered signs of livestock trails and hoof prints, mainly confined to paths to water, shade or lounging areas. Almost no resistance to pin flag wire penetration into the upper 6-8 inches of soil.
	5	None	Very few signs of trails or hoof prints on bare soil. No resistance to pin flag wire penetration into soil.
Always score Sheet and Rill Erosion. Score other erosion types when present.			
Sheet and Rill	1	Very Severe	Sheet and rill erosion is active throughout pasture; rills 3-8 inches deep at close intervals and/or grazing terraces are close-spaced with some slope slippage.
	2	Severe	Most sheet and rill erosion confined to steepest terrain of pasture; well defined rills 0.5-3 inches deep at close intervals and/or grazing terraces present.
	3	Moderate	Most sheet and rill erosion confined to heavy use areas, especially in lounging areas & near drinking water tanks. Rills 0.5-3 inches deep. Plant / soil debris dams piled at down slope edge.
	4	Slight	No current formation of rills; some evidence of past historic rill formation but are covered with vegetation. Scattered plant / soil debris dams are present.
	5	None Visible	No evidence of current or past formation of sheet flow, rills or "soil scours".
Gully	1	Very Severe	Mass movement of soil, rock, plants, and other debris; occurrence of landslides, debris avalanches, slumps and earth-flow, creep and debris torrents.
	2	Severe	Gully(s) advancing upslope cutting longer channel(s). Revegetating difficult without using constructed structures & livestock exclusion; continuous gully(s) with many finger-like extensions into the slope.
	3	Moderate	Gully(s) present with scattered active erosion, no vegetation at heavy use slopes and/or on bed below overfalls. New eroding channels present and new overfalls appearing along sides and bed of main channel.
	4	Slight	One or more existing stable gullies present, vegetation covers gully bottom and slopes reasonably well; no visual signs of active cutting at gully head or sides. Some soil moved in channel bottom.
	5	None Visible	No gullies; natural drainage ways are stable vegetated channels. Spring or seep fed bare channels are often covered with overhanging vegetation.
Stream bank & Shoreline	1	Very Severe	Stream banks are bare and sloughing. No native vegetation remaining.
	2	Severe	Stream banks are heavily grazed and trampled. Bank sloughing and erosion is quite evident. Little native vegetation remaining.
	3	Moderate	Stream bank vegetation is grazed close but slopes not heavily trampled nor actively eroding. Some native vegetation remaining. Heavy livestock traffic at a few specific points. Remote alternative drinking water facilities may be present usually not sited well to facilitate good livestock distribution.
	4	Slight	Stream bank vegetation is grazed but slopes are stable. Mix of pasture plants, native or naturalized species along water's edge. Muddy livestock stream crossing(s) or pond entrance(s) not used heavily. Alternative drinking water facilities are present and sited to allow for good livestock distribution.
	5	None Visible	Stream bank vegetation is ungrazed or grazed infrequently. Abundant mixture of pasture plants, native or naturalized species along water's edge. Stabilized or constructed livestock stream crossing or watering ramps. Alternative drinking water facilities are used by livestock and sited to allow for good livestock distribution.
Wind	1	Very Severe	Blowouts or dunes present or being formed by wind.
	2	Severe	Soil swept from the established pasture causing plant death by burial or abrasion.
	3	Moderate	Soil swept from adjacent fields or pasture during seedbed preparation and early seedling establishment causing plant death by burial or abrasion.
	4	Slight	Some vegetative debris windrowed. Some dust deposition from offsite source. Minor wind damage to plant leaves.
	5	None Visible	No visible signs of windblown soil or litter. No wind related leaf damage.

Indicator	Score	Descriptor Range	Detailed Description of the Score
The following possible causes for poor plant vigor should be evaluated if Vigor Score < 4.			
P and K Status	1	Near zero or Imbalanced	No soil testing management; Very low P & K, or very high P & K.
	2	Severely limiting	No soil testing management; Low P and K. Confirm with soil testing.
	3	Moderately limiting	No soil testing management; Low P, optimum K; or low P, high K; or optimum P, low K; high P, low K; or high P, high K.
	4	Slightly limiting	Soil testing practiced every 3-6 years; Optimum P, high K; or high P, optimum K.
	5	Not limiting	Soil testing practiced every 2-3 yrs; Optimum P and K.
Tissue N Status	1	Yellow-Brown	Visually, leaves appear yellowish or brownish color relative to natural color for the species. Leaf tips may be brown or withering. N is deficient. However, excessive N may result in dark green appearance and potentially toxic concentrations.
	2	Yellow-Pale Green	Leaves are yellowish to pale green. Tissue testing indicates limited for optimum growth.
	3	Pale Green	Leaf tissue is pale green or slightly yellowish in color for the specific species. Moderately N deficient based on tissue testing.
	4	Pale-Natural Green	Leaf color is slightly pale but generally of the natural green color for the species.
	5	Natural Green	Leaf tissue has natural green color specific for the crop. Optimum N concentration based on tissue testing.
Soil pH	1	pH <4.5	pH < 4.5, or > 9.0 based on Soil Testing.
	2	pH 4.5-5.0	pH=4.5-5.0, or 8.5-9.0 based on Soil Testing.
	3	pH 5.1-5.5	pH=5.1-5.5, or 7.9-8.4 based on Soil Testing.
	4	pH 5.6-6.0	pH=5.6-6.0, or 7.4-7.8 based on Soil Testing.
	5	pH 6.0-7.3	pH=6.0-7.3 based on Soil Testing.
Site Adaptation [Long term climate and natural soil characteristics affect adaptation of desired species.]	1	Very Poor	Properly planted and established desired species are no longer present.
	2	Poor	Properly planted and established desired species are nearly gone. Volunteer unwanted species dominate.
	3	Good	One or more properly planted and established, or recruited desired species are missing. Unwanted species invading.
	4	Very Good	Properly planted and established, or recruited desired species still represented, but not in desired proportions
	5	Excellent	Properly planted and established, or recruited desired species are present in desired proportions
Climatic Stresses [mainly considered as recent "weather" effects]	1	Very Severe, dying	Brown and dying leaf tips due to stress from temperature (cold or hot) or moisture. Frost heaved plants, most with severed roots and dying. Major plant loss due to flooding, submergence or ice sheets. Stress may be from recent or extended weather patterns.
	2	Severe, no night recovery	Wilted plants, very little recovery during night. Or, some frost heaved plants, recovery slow. Some spotty stand loss due to flooding or ice sheets. Stress may be from recent or extended weather patterns.
	3	Moderate, mid-day stress	Wilting during heat of the day but recovery at night. Or, weak plants from winter damage or short-term submergence. Or, freezing damage to foliage. Stress may be from recent or extended weather patterns.
	4	Slight wilt or discolor	Dry conditions, but only slight wilting. Temperatures just outside the favorable range for optimum growth. Or, slight leaf yellowing due to cold, hot or wet conditions. Stress is most likely from recent weather patterns.
	5	None	No evidence of stress due to recent or long-term weather patterns.
Insects/Disease	1	Severe	Insects or diseases have consumed or damaged more than 50% of the leaf surface area.
	2	At Threshold	Insect or disease outbreak at economic threshold; treatment needed immediately.
	3	Near Threshold	Insect or disease outbreak near economic threshold, continue to watch and weigh options for treatment.
	4	Slight	Some insect and/or disease is present, but little impact on forage quality or growth rates.
	5	None	No visible signs of plant damage due to pest or diseases.
Biological Activity Assessment			
Earthworms & Dung Beetles (Not an official PCS Category but useful for soil health evaluation)	1	Poor	No evidence of worms or castings. 0-1 earthworm per per shovelful of soil taken from upper 12 inches. No dung beetle evidence. Manure paddies intact and not decomposing
	3	Medium	Scattered worm castings are found in the pasture. 2-10 earthworms per shovelful of soil taken from upper 12 inches. Some manure paddies have beetle activity.
	5	Good	Worm castings evident throughout. 10 + earthworms per shovelful of soil taken from upper 12 inches. Beetles easily found in manure. Manure paddies disintegrated in a few days.