

## Using the GGLCC Georgia Forage Stick

The first rule of grazing management is monitoring pastures for proper minimum grazing height. The minimum grazing height establishes the point at which livestock should be rotated off of a pasture. Along with energy reserves in the roots of the plants, the stubble that is left results in faster regrowth for the next grazing cycle.

Note on the forage stick that the recommended minimum grazing height is 3" for tall fescue, and 2" for bermudagrass. Other minimum grazing heights are: bahiagrass 2", ryegrass & small grains 3". Keep in mind these are **minimum** heights. Grazing can be stopped at higher residuals which can lead to even quicker recovery.

Dry matter production in lb/acre, for tall fescue and bermudagrass, is already calculated on the forage stick. If these are dominant forages in the pasture you are measuring use this pre-calculated info. Using the forage stick hold the tip of the stick to the ground and observe the production value that best represents the "leafy" height of the pasture. Make several observations to get an average production across the pasture. Using this production number use the formula and additional information (Forage Utilization (%), Forage Intake As % of Body Weight) on the stick for determining number of days of available grazing. Remember to convert % to decimal form (60% to 0.60):

**Example:** Measuring a four acre tall fescue pasture I determined average production to be 2520 lbs/acre, an average height of about 15.5 inches. I want to leave a residual of about 4 inches which corresponds to about 210 lbs/acre meaning I have 2310 lbs/acre of forage available ( $2520 - 210 = 2310$ ). How many days will this take to graze with forty 1,200 lb lactating cows?

Using the formula and info on the stick:

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If you are measuring a pasture that is dominate bahiagrass there is no pre-calculated production information, and total lbs/ac will have to be calculated. Assume you measure a total height in a bahiagrass pasture of 8" and want to graze it to 2" with the same herd as the above example. Obtain an average height of the pasture measuring leaf height only, not seed heads. Find the table that provides **Estimated Dry Matter (Lb/A-Inch)** bahiagrass is 225 lb/A-Inch. Multiple 6" of available forage by 225 lb/A-Inch to obtain Total Lb Forage ( $225 \times 6 = 1350$  lb/acre). Using the same formula:

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## Grazing Arithmetic

Calculating number of Paddocks

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Calculating Needed Paddock Size

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Calculating Days of Grazing in a known acreage

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