

Date:
March 2018

How Photogenic is Your Forage?

“After the science and documentation are done, a few good photos completes the story.”
Tess Davidson

“Pictures are worth a thousand words, especially if taken annually”
Kari Bondaroff

Materials needed:

- camera
- monitoring stick (grazing stick or meter stick)
- sturdy electric fencing post
- brightly coloured duct tape
- white board and dry erase pen (or some other method of recording photo info)
- measuring tape
- hula hoop
- skeet
- pen & paper to write notes.

Relevant Factsheets:

- Forage Fact #110:
Locating Field Benchmarks For Monitoring
- Forage Fact #112:
Estimating Forage Yields Yourself
- Forage Fact #113:
Are you Happy with Your Forage Stand?

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Published by
P.R.F.A. of BC

For more Forage Facts visit:
www.peaceforage.bc.ca

Context For This Factsheet

This forage fact is part of the project for Improving Productivity & Profitability of Forages. It will provide you with a step by step guide to doing your own field and plant monitoring using the photo reference point procedure.

Pre-field Preparation

Prepare a monitoring stick: Before heading out to the field mark your grazing stick by placing duct tape on it from 0-6", 12-18", and 24-30". This makes it look similar to a survey rod so the markings can be seen from a distance, *photo to right*.

Measure your pace: It is important to know the distance of one of your normal walking paces prior to going to the field. Mark a starting point and walk 20 paces. Measure the distance and divide by 20. For the authors, our paces are about 2.5ft.



Procedure in the Field

Step 1 With all materials in tow, head out to the field and find the area that you would like to monitor. Record the benchmark or GPS location for this area and place a marker (we use a skeet or rock painted bright orange). The marker will remain in the field so that you can come back and monitor the same area again later. Place a grazing stick into the ground directly behind the skeet and then place a hula hoop so that the skeet and the grazing stick are in the middle of it, *photo above*.



Step 2 Begin by taking a photo of the benchmark ID or GPS location on a white board label or some other method of your choice. This is very helpful for when you get home and are down loading photos on the computer. You will know which pictures go with each benchmark, *photo to the left*.

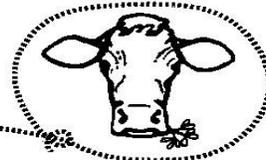
Step 3 With your camera in landscape mode, take a photo looking straight down into the hula hoop and the benchmark. Be sure to set the zoom into the photos so that all 3 duct tape portions and the hula hoop are included, *photo to right*.



Note about camera settings
Keep the same lens zoom & landscape mode settings for steps 3, 4 & 5.

Step 4 Measure 6.6ft or 2m or 2.5 paces from your stick. Take a photo so that the bottom of your screen is at the base of the grazing stick and you can see the field in the background, *photo to left*.

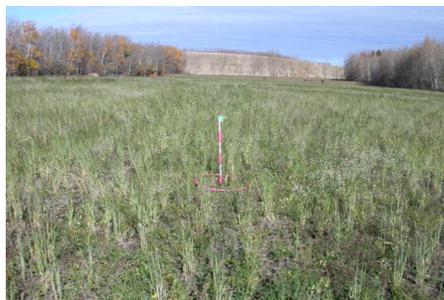
Peace River Forage Association
of British Columbia



Using Landmarks:

If you don't have access to a GPS, benchmarks can still be plotted by using landmarks such as fence posts, trees or buildings. Pace or measure the distance from the landmark to the area you want to monitor. Record the information for future monitoring. The landmark you use can also be marked with survey tape or spray paint so that locating it in the future is easier.

Step 5 Don't move. Take a second photo at this spot, (ie. 6.6 ft or 2 m or 2.5 paces from benchmark) so that the top of the camera screen is at the 1 ft. or 0.3 m mark of the monitoring stick, *photo to the right.*



Step 6 Take the final photo at 33ft or 10m or 13 paces from the monitoring stick. Pace out this distance or use a measuring tape. Take a photo with the grazing stick at the center of the camera screen. Adjust your camera as necessary to capture the landscape, *photo to left.*

Step 7 Take any other photos at this time, that will help you in accessing your forage crop. It is a good idea to write down information about what you are trying to capture in the photos for future reference.

Things to ponder: Skeets can get lost in the growth of the crop and make finding the exact location of your benchmark difficult. Step on skeets so they don't get relocated. One option is to add a tall stake to mark the benchmark during the growing season. Another options is using rocks taped in brightly colored duct tape.

References:

Gardner, W., M. Khadka and V. Volpatti. 2013. *The Grazing Response Index Project*. AAFC. Kelowna, BC: Thompson Rivers University, 39pp.

Photo sequence (*below*) taken at a particular benchmark at similar times over several years shows the growth of the forage crop.



July 8, 2015 - Shortly after seeding.

Oct 5, 2015 - Growth 12 weeks after seeding.

June 1, 2016 - One year after seeding.

July 10, 2017 - Two years after seeding.

Sept 25, 2017 - Re-growth in fall of year 3.

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Funding Partners for Improving Productivity & Profitability of Forages Project



BC AGRI
Strategic Outreach Initiative

PRAD
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