

# How much do my animals eat?

## How much forage do I have?

To properly answer this question one should use the principle of an Animal Unit Month (AUM).

**What's an AUM?** An AUM is the amount of air dried forage required to sustain a 1000 pound cow and her calf for one month. It is the best unit to use when planning pasture management strategies. The following table lists common animals and their AUM equivalents.

Animal	AUM Equivalent	Animals/AUM	Air Dry Forage in Pounds
Mature Goat	0.15	6.5	120
Mature Sheep	0.20	5	160
1000 lb Cow with Calf	1.00	1	800
Mature Horse	1.25	.75	990
Mature Bison Bull	1.50	.5	1180

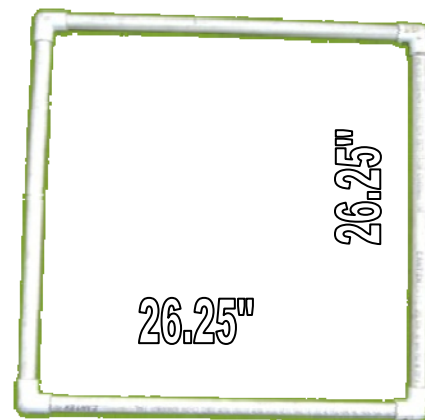
**How do I measure my pasture's production?** One way to measure pasture production is to clip and weigh the amount of forage production in a hoop or square. Clip and weigh the production in grams using a 26.25" X 26.25" inch square or a hoop with a circumference of 93". The result will give you grams per hoop or square. Simply multiply that number by 20 to convert grams per hoop to pounds per acre. A worksheet is provided on the back side of this handout to work through the numbers. A table is also provided to convert fresh cut forage to an air dried equivalent.

### Hoop



93" Long Coated Wire Cable  
Connect ends with cable ferrule

### PVC Square



**Clip and weigh.** Randomly throw your hoop or square in three different places in your pasture. Clip the forage in each hoop and place it in a paper or plastic bag. Weigh each bag using the portable scale and record the weight in grams.

Hoop 1                      Weight \_\_\_\_\_ grams. A  
 Hoop 2                      Weight \_\_\_\_\_ grams. B  
 Hoop 3                      Weight \_\_\_\_\_ grams. C  
                                     Total Weight \_\_\_\_\_ grams. (Add A,B&C)  
                                     Average Weight \_\_\_\_\_ grams. (Divide Total Weight by 3)  
 Pounds per Acre of Fresh Forage \_\_\_\_\_ (Multiply Average Weight by 20)  
 Pounds per Acre Air Dry Forage \_\_\_\_\_ (Multiply by conversion from Table 1)  
                                     Take Half and Leave Half \_\_\_\_\_ (Multiply by 0.5)

**Table 1. Dry Matter Forage Conversion**

<b>Grass Stage</b>	<b>Conversion number for Cool Season Grasses</b>
Before Heading Out	0.35
Headed Out	0.45
Seed Ripe	0.60
Leaves Dry	0.85
Apparent Dormancy	0.95

**Example.** Sample was taken in late August – Seed ripe

Hoop 1                      Weight 175 \_\_\_\_\_ grams. A  
 Hoop 2                      Weight 150 \_\_\_\_\_ grams. B  
 Hoop 3                      Weight 125 \_\_\_\_\_ grams. C  
                                     Total Weight 450 \_\_\_\_\_ grams. (Add A,B&C)  
                                     Average Weight 150 \_\_\_\_\_ grams. (Divide Total Weight by 3)  
 Pounds per Acre of Fresh Forage 3000 \_\_\_\_\_ (Multiply Average Weight by 20)  
 Pounds per Acre Air Dry Forage 1800 \_\_\_\_\_ (Multiply by conversion from Table 1)  
                                     Take Half and Leave Half 900 \_\_\_\_\_ (Multiply by 0.5)

In this example we have 900 pounds of usable forage per acre. Or just over 1 AUM per acre (1 AUM = 800 lbs). This means we have enough feed for one month per acre for one cow, or 7 goats, or 5.5 sheep, or 0.9 horses.