

CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

Population density of digit grass tillers subjected to defoliation frequencies and intensities

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The objective of this study was to evaluate the population density of basal, aerial and total tiller of the digit grass (*Digitaria eriantha* Steud cv. Suvernola) submitted to two frequencies and two defoliation severities. The experiment was carried out at the Field of Forage Practices of the Animal Science Department of the Federal University of Sergipe, in an area of 80 m². The treatments consisted of a combination of two frequencies (40 and 50 cm) and two treatments (10 and 20 cm) of defoliation, totaling four treatments (40 x 10 cm; 40x20 cm, 50x10 cm and 50x20 cm). A randomized block design with five replications was used. The population density of basal and aerial tiller was determined by counting the tiller contained in a sampling frame with an area equal to 0.23 m². Tiller counting was performed when the plants reached the levels of defoliation. The data were submitted to analysis of variance with 5% probability, when it was found significant in the results, the Tukey test was performed with 5% of significance, using the SAS statistical program. The treatments did not significantly influence the population density of basal tiller, presenting, on average, 578.3 tiller m⁻². The density of aerial tiller was influenced by frequency and severity of defoliation (P <0.05), presenting a higher mean for treatment of 40 cm of frequency and 20 cm of severity (317.9 tills m⁻²). The density of total tillers was influenced by frequency and severity of defoliation, where plants submitted to the frequency of 40 cm and post-cut residue of 20 cm showed a higher number of total tillers, 957.45 m⁻² tiller. The increase of the height of residue provides the largest number of aerial tillers.

Keywords: forage canopy, pasture, persistence of pasture

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