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CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

SPATIAL DISTRIBUTION OF POST-GRAZING MORPHOLOGICAL COMPONENTS IN TIFTON 85 GRASS UNDER STRATEGIES OF DEFOLIATION WITH SHEEP

Bruno Bizerra do NASCIMENTO*[1], Ellen da Costa GOMES[1], Magno José Duarte CÂNDIDO[1], Danielle Nascimento COUTINHO[2]; Janaely Silva PEREIRA[1], Theyson Duarte Maranhão[1], Odecia Gomes dos SANTOS[1]; Ana Flávia Gouveia de FARIA[3]

*corresponding author: brunobizerra1994@hotmail.com
[1]Universidade Federal do Ceará, Fortaleza, Ceará, Brasil
[2]Universidade Federal de Viçosa, Viçosa, Minas Gerais, Brasil
[3]Fundação Universidade do Tocantins – UNITINS, Palmas, Tocantins, Brasil

The distribution of morphological components and forage mass describe aspects of pasture structure that affect the grazing process, forage consumption and regrowth of pasture. Knowledge of these answers is essential to the use of grasses in pastures. This study was conducted to evaluate the vertical structure in Tifton 85 grass under two frequencies and two intensities of defoliation, managed under intermittent stocking with sheep. The experiment was conducted at Núcleo de Ensino e Estudo em Forragicultura - NEEF, belonging to the Universidade Federal do Ceará, in Fortaleza, Ceará, in the period from June to December 2015. The treatments were combinations between two defoliation frequencies (85 and 95% of interception of photosynthetically active radiation - IPAR) and intensities (1.0 and 1.8 of residual leaf area index - LAI), in a 2x2 factorial arrangement and a completely randomized design, with four replication. The grazing was carried out by Morada Nova sheep, managed under intermittent stocking using the *mob-stocking* technique. The sward structure was evaluated by using the 'inclined point quadrat' methodology. The percentage and distribution of the morphological components along the vertical profile of the pastures were modified by the combinations between frequency and intensity of defoliation. In the pastures managed under 85x1.8 there was an almost exclusive presence of remaining leaves from grazing in the upper strata and in the pastures with 95x1.8 e 85x1.0 equal proportions of leaves and stems in the upper strata were observed. The pastures managed with 95x1.0 presented higher presence of stem and dead material in the upper strata. The pastures with 95x1.8 and 85x1.8 presented a higher occurrence of dead material in the lower half of the pasture. The occurrence of weeds was low in all managements. The Tifton 85 grass managed with 85% of IPAR and residual IAF of 1.0 showed better distribution and occurrence of leaves and stems throughout the canopy profile and lower occurrence of dead material and favouring a rapid regrowth of pasture and less losses of forage by senescence.

Keywords: Cynodon sp, intermittent stocking, residual leaf area index, sward structure