

CONSTRUINDO SABERES, FORMANDO PESSOAS E TRANSFORMANDO A PRODUÇÃO ANIMAL

## PERCENTAGE OF MORPHOLOGICAL COMPONENTS OF *BRACHIARIA* SPP. AFTER GRAZING UNDER DIFFERENT FORAGE OFFERS

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The ideal pasture management ensures weed control, reduction land losses due to degradation and pasture persistence, resulting in better system sustainability. Aiming to evaluate the percentage of morphological components of *Brachiaria* spp. after grazing under different forage offers, the current study was planned. The experimental design was completely randomized blocks with treatments disposed in factorial scheme (3 × 4) with tree replicates, which the first factor was composed by *Brachiaria* cultivars (*B. brizantha* cv. Marandu, *B. brizantha* cv. Xaraés and *B. spp.* cv. Mulato) and the second was composed by forage offer (4, 7, 10 and 13% of animals live weight). The experiment took place at UNESP, Jaboticabal, SP, between November of 2007 and February of 2009. Non-lactating dairy cow and heifers according to forage offers grazed the area. After animals left, two samples were collected, weighted and the morphological components (leaf blade, stem + hem, inflorescence (if present) and dead material) were separated. Posteriorly, the samples dried and cold were weighted. The data were analyzed with replicates in time. Means were compared by Tukey test at 5% of significance. The interaction between forage offer and grazing cycle was not significant ( $p>0.05$ ) to percentage of leaf blade (LBaf). During the first evaluation year and first grazing cycle there was increase on the LBaf ( $p>0.05$ ) along grazing cycles. Lower LBaf on lower pasture offer was due to higher grazing intensity, in other words, leaf blades and stem were consumed until reduced canopy height. By hypothesis, this pasture had lower nutritive value, due to consumption of newer leaves. Paulino et al. (2004) reports that to achieve faster and strong regrowth it is necessary the maintenance of apical meristem and leaf area. The percentage of stem (Saf) and dead material (DMaf) vary due to forage offer, grazing cycle and the interaction between both factors. Higher forage offer provided forage densification, which increases light competition and stem elongation, providing increases in Saf, since this component was less grazed than the others. During the first year and the third grazing cycle, the DMaf were lower to 10 and 13% of forage offer. Probably, higher stem elongation reduced forage density on superior parts of canopy, allowing light to penetrate and reducing the DMaf. Lower forage offers would be recommended due to higher percentage of leaf blades and lower stem elongation, which contributes to better canopy recovery after defoliation.

**Keywords:** grazing, marandu grass, mulato grass, pasture management, xaraes grass.

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