

# Monitoring pastures

Monitoring is one of the three basic parts of managing any native pasture. Remember we said that you need to understand the ecology of grazed pastures, to follow the local guidelines, and to check what affect your management is having on pasture condition.

Monitoring has two important results. It encourages you to look more closely at the plant side of grazing, and it provides a permanent record so that you can pick up gradual changes over the years. Don't rely on memory for this detail.

This book does not show you how to monitor pastures; the various methods are described in detail in another DPI publication GRASS Check.

GRASS Check offers you a number of techniques, with varying depth of recording, for looking at the amount of herbage in the paddock, at ground cover, at desirable and undesirable species, individual species and the density of mature or regrowth timber.

This chapter provides photostandards for estimating the amount of standing dry matter in speargrass paddocks, and illustrates some of the more important grasses, and common native legumes, found in the region.

If you become more interested in identifying plants, we suggest you get hold of some of the more comprehensive books listed at the end of the chapter.

## Estimating feed in a paddock

Knowing the weight of herbage (total dry matter, not wet green leaf) per hectare allows you to check on your stocking rate. Compare the stand of feed over your paddock with these photostandards



▲ 4900 kg/ha dry matter



**A love grass**  
**(*Eragrostis* sp.)**  
Poor quality feed.



**Woodland love grass**  
**(*Eragrostis sororia*)**  
Poor quality feed



**Slender chloris**  
**(*Chloris divaricata*)**  
Leaf base like miniature rhodes grass.



**Poverty grass**  
**(*Eremochloa bimaculata*)**  
As its name suggests!



**Wire grass**  
(*Aristida* sp.)



**Branched wiregrass**  
(*Aristida armata*)



**Small burr grass**  
(*Tragus australianus*)



**Sedges**  
(*Cyperus* spp.)

## Identifying other plants

If you are interested in identifying trees, shrubs, forbs, ferns and grasses in the region, get hold of a copy of *Plants of central Queensland: their identification and uses*.

