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## [Methods of surveying and measuring vegetation.](#)

Author(s) : [BROWN, Dorothy.](#)

Book : [Methods of surveying and measuring vegetation.](#) 1954 pp.223 pp. ref.bik

Abstract : This book compiled by Miss Brown of the Commonwealth Bureau of Plant Industry and Field Crops should be read by every agronomist. The subject matter deals with methodology should have a wide appeal for biologists generally. This monograph is well illustrated, many of the photographs being of really excellent quality. Techniques of grassland measurement are reviewed as they concern the various types of environmental conditions including the various range lands of the sub-tropics, but chiefly those in more temperate zones. The book contains

numerous methods that have been found useful for botanical analysis, for yields and utilization applicable, in the aggregate, to all sorts of grassland, from intensive to extensive use of land.

Many of the chapters will appeal to progressive farmers and pastoralists; for chapter 16 which deals with pasture recording should be studied and the findings well be acted upon by progressive men in Britain and other countries. The chapters (14 and 15) concerning the animal and its production at pasture are excellent, and in places the author tends to go into too much detail, almost to the point of being unnecessarily repetitive. The chapter on the Theory of Sampling, contributed by Jolly, offers a well-reasoned theme, but there is one statement in it upon which the reviewer must comment. Methods of sampling are discussed and here the author (page 16) " In a pasture where the vegetation is highly variable ... it may be possible to work with quite a small unit, otherwise an undesirable amount of material may have to be sampled to give the required degree of accuracy. An extreme case of this may be the sampling of an area of grassland mainly occupied by two species which occur in large areas of say half an acre occupied almost solely by one species. A considerable increase in accuracy would be achieved by halving the size of the sampling unit and doubling the number of units [*quadrats*]. . .". The pasture agronomist may quarrel with this approach because the biologist ought first to define the limits of the associations and then take his measurements within each. Quite clearly in the text quoted there are two well-defined associations and it is both biologically and statistically unsound to examine them other than as two separate pasture units. The reviewer never tires of asserting to his fellow agronomists that they must not use statistics-like fire or water, statistical treatment is an excellent, even indispensable servant but an awfully bad master.

This monograph by Miss Brown is the outcome of long sustained study of the subject and she is to be congratulated on a task well done. It is by no means easy to keep abreast with the very rapidly expanding literature in the field of grassland and animal production. Possibly for that very reason the book does not give adequate cover to work done upon since 1949. One other aspect not dealt with at all (or given but the briefest mention) is that of grassland surveys. Such surveys as have been carried out in various parts of the world, including Britain, New Zealand, Australia, N. Rhodesia, Kenya and Holland, have provided valuable basic data, but the techniques of mapping and the field procedures differ widely from place to place. It is to be hoped that Miss Brown will add a chapter dealing with this subject when comes the time (as surely it soon must) to produce a second edition.-WILLIAM DAVIES.

Record Number : 19540700937

Publisher : Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, Farnham Royal, Bucks, England.

Language of text : [English](#)

Language of summary : [English](#)

Indexing terms for this abstract:

Descriptor(s) : agricultural sciences, agronomy, crops, environmental factors, farm crops, grasslands, literature, measurement, methodology, monographs, pasture communities, rangelands, sampling, subtropics, surveying, surveys, techniques, t zones, tropics, tyres, utilization, varieties, world, yields

Identifier(s) : Britain, grazing lands, methods, metrology, range pastures, samplir subsaharan Africa, subtropical zones, tires, tropical countries, tropical zones, Uni worldwide

Geographical Location(s) : Africa South of Sahara, Australia, Kenya, Netherlands, UK, Zimbabwe

Broader term(s) : APEC countries, Australasia, Oceania, Commonwealth of Nation Countries, OECD Countries, ACP Countries, Anglophone Africa, Africa, Developing Africa, Africa South of Sahara, Benelux, European Union Countries, Kingdom of th Western Europe, Europe, British Isles, SADC Countries, Southern Africa

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