Accurately determining stocking rate is important to successful range management. Because forage supplies on rangelands vary drastically across seasons and years, livestock numbers should be appropriate for present and projected forage supplies. This improves range conditions while maintaining maximum livestock production. Since most adjustments in stocking rate are based on experience and intuition, the accuracy of these adjustments varies considerably among individuals.

This photo guide can help you improve the consistency and accuracy of your stocking rate determinations. Pictures representing various forage quantities are matched to randomly placed plots in the pasture. These photos help you estimate pounds of forage per acre. This figure is then adjusted for moisture content and used to calculate the animal unit days of grazing available from the existing forage supply.

*The original photo guide was developed by Larry D. White, Extension Range Specialist Emeritus, and Calvin Richardson, currently with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.*

*Extension Range Specialists, The Texas A&M University System.*
416 lb/ac 
buffalograss, curly mesquite

826 lb/ac 
little bluestem, seep muhly, dropseed, sideoats grama

1090 lb/ac 
threeawn, curly mesquite, Tx. wintergrass, doveweed

1247 lb/ac 
Tx. wintergrass, dropseed

1484 lb/ac 
sideoats grama, Tx. wintergrass

1756 lb/ac 
curly mesquite, Tx. wintergrass
2264 lb/ac
curly mesquite, Tx. wintergrass, dove weed

2651 lb/ac
buffalograss, Tx. wintergrass

2806 lb/ac
sideoats grama, curly mesquite, Tx. grama, halls panicum

3001 lb/ac
curly mesquite, Tx. wintergrass (mesquite omitted)

3379 lb/ac
little bluestem, dropseed, sedge, anemone

3866 lb/ac
little bluestem, dropseed, sedge, anemone
4230 lb/ac
side oats grama, Tx. wintergrass

4808 lb/ac
side oats grama, Tx. wintergrass, white tridens

6936 lb/ac
kleingrass

7448 lb/ac
little bluestem, sedge, anemone