



# Forage Research in Texas

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## Animal Performance on Tifton-44 and Coastal Bermudagrass Pastures

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### ABSTRACT

Tifton-44 and Coastal bermudagrass were grazed continuously at four stocking rates over a 2-year period. Average daily gains did not differ among the two cultivars. Tifton-44 was slightly earlier in the spring.

### INTRODUCTION

Evaluation of potentially new bermudagrass cultivars has shown that there are a number of new hybrids that possess greater quality characteristics than Coastal with equal or near equal quantity capabilities. Recently the release of Tifton-44 gained rather wide range publicity and gained ready acceptance throughout most of the bermudagrass growing area. Tifton-44 was released primarily for its cold tolerance and as an improvement in quality over Midland bermudagrass.

### MATERIALS

Pastures of Coastal and Tifton-44 were established on the Texas A&M Farm in the Brazos River bottom near College Station, Texas. The pastures were fertilized at the rate of 100 pounds of nitrogen per acre in March with an additional 100 pounds in July of each year. The pastures were grazed continuously at four stocking rates for an average of 167 days each year. Estimates of forage on offer were made at weekly intervals and animal weights recorded at 28-day intervals.

### DISCUSSION

Average stocking rates for the two cultivars are shown in Table 1. Coastal was stocked slightly lighter at the two heavy rates and heavier at the two lighter rates than Tifton-44. The overall results for both cultivars were similar. At all stocking rates the average forage on offer each week was greater for Coastal than for Tifton-44 but in general there was sufficient dry matter on offer to satisfy intake requirements. The difference in forage on offer had an influence on selectivity which was expressed as decreases in average daily gain with increasing stocking rates. This difference could also explain the differences in average daily gain at each grazing pressure between Coastal and Tifton-44.

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Table 1. Animal performance on Tifton-44 and Coastal bermudagrass pastures, 1981-1982.

		Grazing Pressure			
		Heavy	med. Heavy	med. Light	Light
Tifton-44	HD/ac	5.0	4.3	2.7	2.4
	Avg. Da. Ga., lbs	0.29	0.40	0.64	0.82
	Ga./ac., lbs	242	287	288	328
Coastal	HD/ac	4.8	3.9	3.2	2.7
	Avg. Da. Ga., lbs	0.35	0.68	1.01	1.04
	Ga./ac., lbs	280	443	540	469

Table 2. Average dry matter per hectare by grazing pressure.

Cultivar	Grazing Pressure			
	Heavy	med. Heavy	med. Light	Light
Tifton 44	3520	3890	4510	5190
Coastal	5330	5190	8120	7880