

# Forage

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**Forage** is plant material (mainly plant leaves and stems) eaten by grazing livestock.<sup>[1]</sup> Historically, the term *forage* has meant only plants eaten by the animals directly as pasture, crop residue, or immature cereal crops, but it is also used more loosely to include similar plants cut for fodder and carried to the animals, especially as hay or silage.<sup>[2]</sup> The term **forage fish** refers to small schooling fish that are preyed on by larger aquatic animals.<sup>[3]</sup>

While the term *forage* has a broad definition, the term **forage crop** is used to define crops, annual or biennial, which are grown to be utilized by grazing or harvesting as a whole crop.<sup>[4]</sup>

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## Common forages

### Grasses

Grass forages include:<sup>[5][6]</sup>

- *Agrostis* spp. – bentgrasses
  - *Agrostis capillaris* – common bentgrass
  - *Agrostis stolonifera* – creeping bentgrass
- *Andropogon hallii* – sand bluestem
- *Arrhenatherum elatius* – false oat-grass
- *Bothriochloa bladhii* – Australian bluestem
- *Bothriochloa pertusa* – hurricane grass
- *Brachiaria decumbens* – Surinam grass
- *Brachiaria humidicola* – koronivia grass
- *Bromus* spp. – bromegrasses
- *Cenchrus ciliaris* – buffelgrass
- *Chloris gayana* – Rhodes grass



Bull feeding on grass

- *Cynodon dactylon* – bermudagrass
- *Dactylis glomerata* – orchard grass
- *Echinochloa pyramidalis* – antelope grass
- *Entolasia imbricata* – bungoma grass
- *Festuca* spp. – fescues
  - *Festuca arundinacea* – tall fescue
  - *Festuca pratensis* – meadow fescue
  - *Festuca rubra* – red fescue
- *Heteropogon contortus* – black spear grass
- *Hymenachne amplexicaulis* – West Indian marsh grass
- *Hyparrhenia rufa* – jaragua
- *Leersia hexandra* – southern cutgrass
- *Lolium* spp. – ryegrasses
  - *Lolium multiflorum* – Italian ryegrass
  - *Lolium perenne* – perennial ryegrass
- *Megathyrsus maximus* – Guinea grass
- *Melinis minutiflora* – molasses grass
- *Paspalum dilatatum* – dallisgrass
- *Phalaris arundinacea* – reed canarygrass
- *Phleum pratense* – timothy
- *Poa* spp. – bluegrasses, meadow-grasses
  - *Poa arachnifera* – Texas bluegrass
  - *Poa pratensis* – Kentucky bluegrass
  - *Poa trivialis* – rough bluegrass
- *Setaria sphacelata* – African bristlegrass
- *Themeda triandra* – kangaroo grass
- *Thinopyrum intermedium* – intermediate wheatgrass



Horse-drawn transport of fodder in Romania



Meadow of perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*)

## Herbaceous legumes

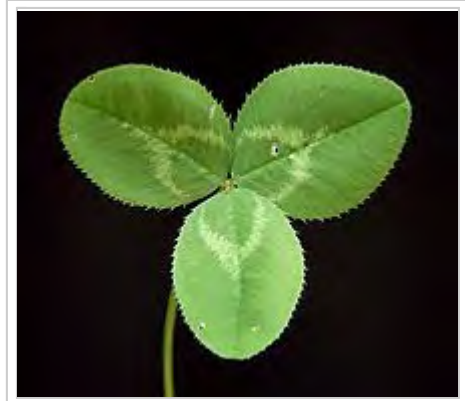
Herbaceous legume forages include:<sup>[7]</sup>

- *Arachis pintoi* – pinto peanut
- *Chamaecrista rotundifolia* – roundleaf sensitive pea
- *Clitoria ternatea* – butterfly-pea
- *Lotus corniculatus* – bird's-foot trefoil
- *Macroptilium atropurpureum* – purple bush-bean
- *Macroptilium bracteatum* – burgundy bean
- *Medicago* spp. – medics
  - *Medicago sativa* – alfalfa, lucerne
  - *Medicago truncatula* – barrel medic
- *Melilotus* spp. – sweetclovers
- *Neonotonia wightii* – perennial soybean
- *Onobrychis viciifolia* – common sainfoin
- *Stylosanthes* spp. – stylo



Alfalfa

- *Stylosanthes humilis* – Townsville stylo
- *Stylosanthes scabra* – shrubby stylo
- *Trifolium* spp. – clovers
  - *Trifolium hybridum* – alsike clover
  - *Trifolium incarnatum* – crimson clover
  - *Trifolium pratense* – red clover
  - *Trifolium repens* – white clover
- *Vicia* spp. – vetches
  - *Vicia articulata* – oneflower vetch
  - *Vicia ervilia* – bitter vetch
  - *Vicia narbonensis* – narbon vetch
  - *Vicia sativa* – common vetch, tare
  - *Vicia villosa* – hairy vetch
- *Vigna parkeri* – creeping vigna



White clover (*Trifolium repens*)

## Tree legumes

Tree legume forages include:

- *Acacia aneura* – mulga
- *Albizia* spp. – silk trees
- *Albizia canescens* – Belmont siris
- *Albizia lebbbeck* – lebbeck
- *Enterolobium cyclocarpum* – earpodtree
- *Leucaena leucocephala* – leadtree

## Silage

Silage may be composed by the following:<sup>[8]</sup>

- Alfalfa
- Maize (corn)
- Grass-legume mix
- Sorghums
- Oats



Sheep with silage

## Crop residue

Crop residues used as forage include:

- Sorghum
- Corn or soybean stover

## See also

- Grass-fed beef

## References

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