A METHOD OF HARVESTING SAMPLES OF PASTURE FORAGE

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A simple device for use in the harvesting of small samples of pasture forage was made from strap iron 1\frac{1}{2} inches in width and \frac{3}{8} inch in thickness. The iron was shaped into a rectangular frame 20.79 inches by 20.79 inches inside measurement. A separate bar of the same material fits loosely over the frame. The ends of the bar turn downward to keep it in place. (Fig. 1.) The area enclosed by the frame is 3 square feet.
After selecting the area to be harvested, the frame is held in a horizontal position and dropped into place. When the crop is tall, some of the plants are likely to be bent over by the frame. These may be straightened and those which should be within the frame and those which should be outside may be adjusted to their proper positions by drawing the index and middle fingers along the inside and outside of the frame. A sheep shears is used for cutting the forage. Before the removable bar is put into place, a "swath" is cut by resting the base of the blades on the edge of the frame next to the operator. After the removal of the first swath, the metal bar is laid on the frame and the cutting completed by moving the bar forward as needed, at all times resting the shears on the bar. When the forage is of sufficient length, the harvest may be facilitated by an assistant who grasps a bunch of the forage, holds it during cutting and lifts it out of the way of the next stroke of the shears.

This method accomplishes several purposes: a rigidly-defined area is harvested; the position of the frame does not change during the collection of the sample because of the weight of the device; the forage is cut without scattering the sample, an accomplishment which is difficult when a hand sickle is used; the forage is cut at a uniform height from the ground; the sample is of convenient size for drying.