



USING A REFRACTOMETER

The following may help those unfamiliar with using a Refractometer.

Refractometer Brix measurements are usually as percentages, i.e., grams of sucrose per 100 grams of solution.

Plants have varying levels of sugars (sucrose). Generally the more they have the more most animals like them. Some fruit growers use a Refractometer to measure sugar levels to determine when to pick. Most plant sugar levels increase with age and then decrease after maturity and have higher levels in the afternoon of a sunny day than in the morning. Levels also increase after several days of sunshine and decrease after days of cloud and/or rain.

Sugars can be measured with a Refractometer by picking parts of the plant and squeezing the juice out with a hand held steel garlic press. As the juice comes out it is dropped onto the prism (glass face) of the Refractometer which should be held level while charging. The whole prism must be covered. This may not occur until the flap is closed.

The Refractometer is a good training tool for those wanting to do all possible for maximum animal production. Just growing tons of pasture does not mean making tons of money. Quality is important. In USA, farmers measure and balance their bought feeds extremely well, but most ignore pasture quality.

Nitrogen and potassium lower the readings. Cows prefer pasture above Brix 4. 7 is excellent and 2 is bad and sometimes they won't eat a 1.

Don't allow children to touch the Refractometer or they can turn the adjusting screw and/or scratch the prism or damage the unit. Set the screw (calibrate) as per the instructions before use and every year if the figures seem wrong. When cleaning it, use a soft damp cloth or damp tissue, not a brush, bucket or hose.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

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