

Summary

Pastures along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico are characterized by the presence of native species, some of which have high forage potential. For the purpose of identifying the most frequent native legumes in this area, and their contribution in botanical composition, measurements were taken every 6 to 7 weeks, between February 1983 and March 1984, at three sites of the Centro de Investigación, Enseñanza y Extensión en Ganadería Tropical (CIEEGT), located at Veracruz, Mexico.

Results indicated that there is no relationship between individual nutrients and the percentage of legumes in the soil. Genera *Desmodium* and *Centrosema* included the highest number of species, five for each one. The average number of nodes/plant varied between periods, being 50 in the dry and north wind periods (107 mm and 16.7 °C) and 300 in the rainy period. Daily DM production of the legumes was low (5.2 kg/ha), while that of the grasses was 68.2 kg/ha. However, the importance of the legumes rests in their contribution to the nutritive value of the pastures. It is suggested to begin collecting native germplasm of *Desmodium* and *Centrosema* in the area, for the purpose of evaluating its performance and production.