Quality assurance for dynamic MLC-based intensity modulated radiotherapy treatment planning is complicated by the fact that the complex motions of the collimator leaves make it essentially impossible to confirm computer generated monitor units by independent calculations. Correct reproduction of the calculated dose distributions by the leaf motions is also difficult to verify. For these and other reasons, transmission dosimetry has been proposed as a possible method of verification of IMRT treatments. This work examines the dosimetric capabilities of a commercial portal imager currently in clinical use. The system features a variety of acquisition modes corresponding to different beam energies, dose rates, scan speeds and scan trigger delays. To establish its utility as a dosimeter, characteristic dose-signal curves were generated and compared with theoretical expectations. To this end, independent ion chamber measurements were carried out and compared with the corresponding detector pixel values in the same geometry. The results confirm the validity of the theory predicting a simple dependence of the detector response on exposure rate. Other dose-response characteristics of the system were also examined to establish detector uniformity and signal reproducibility. Integration of the EPID dose signal can be achieved by means of programmed sequential imaging. The resulting summed images can provide a reasonable qualitative representation of an integrated IMRT field in cases of slow scan speeds. Idealized and real cases will be shown and discussed.