



Setaria grass (*Setaria sphacelata*) for livestock feed on small-scale farms

Objective

To provide high quality forage for livestock feed in humid lowland and highland tropics

Description

- Tufted perennial grass up to 2 m tall. Adapted to a wide range of soils but does not grow well on very acidic soils
- Tolerant of flooding and waterlogging
- Some ecotypes are cold or frost tolerant
- Palatable when young but quality quickly declines with maturity
- Use for permanent pasture for grazing, cut and carry or silage

Limits of use

- Not well adapted to alkaline or very acidic soil
- Not very drought tolerant
- Should not be fed young and as sole feed due to presence of oxalates

Management

Field preparation—well prepared seedbed preferred

Establishment—broadcast seeds at 2–5 kg/ha at a depth no deeper than 2 cm and cover lightly. Can also be planted from root splits

Fertilizer—apply 100 kg DAP or urea per hectare during establishment and 100 kg nitrogen per hectare after every cut

Weeding—slow early growth so weed twice after planting at monthly intervals. Frequent weeding is necessary until well established

Harvesting—cut latest at flowering and then every 3 weeks at a height of 15 cm to maintain quality

Performance

Expect about 10–15 t/ha dry matter per year and 6–15% crude protein

This information leaflet on livestock feeds and feeding technologies for small-scale farmers is developed through collaboration between ILRI and its partners.

For further information, contact

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