



Ruzi grass (*Brachiaria ruziziensis*) for livestock feed on small-scale farms

Objective

To provide high quality forage for livestock feed in the humid and subhumid tropics

Description

- A spreading perennial similar in habit to Para grass up to 1.5 m tall when flowering
- Very palatable and withstands moderately heavy grazing
- Can tolerate dry seasons of up to four months
- Rapid establishment from seed or cuttings
- Use as permanent or semi-permanent pasture for grazing, cut and carry green feed or hay

Limits of use

- Needs well drained fertile soils and not tolerant of very acidic soils
- Not tolerant to frost
- Very susceptible to spittlebug

Management

Field preparation—well prepared seedbed is recommended

Establishment—broadcast seed at 2.5–10 kg/ha or sow in rows 60 cm apart no deeper than 2 cm, lightly cover and compact. It can also be propagated vegetatively by root splits or stem cuttings

Fertilizer—apply 100 kg DAP per hectare during establishment and 100 kg nitrogen per hectare after every cut. Needs high phosphorus in the early growth on a wide range of soils

Weeding—weed twice after planting at monthly intervals during establishment. Once established it can spread and suppress weeds

Harvesting—should be cut before first flowering and then at six week intervals

Performance

Expect around 20 t/ha dry matter yield and 7–13% 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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