



# Buffel grass (*Cenchrus ciliaris*) for livestock feed on small-scale farms

## Objective

To provide high quality forage for livestock feed in semi-arid areas in the tropics

## Description

- Tufted or spreading deep rooting perennial grass
- Very drought tolerant
- Can withstand cutting and heavy grazing
- Wide adaptability
- Aggressive and persistent

## Limits of use

- Requires high levels of soil fertility for good production
- Will not survive prolonged waterlogging
- High oxalate levels can cause toxicity in horses and young ruminants

## Management

**Field preparation**—soil disturbance is generally essential for initial establishment

**Establishment**—broadcast seed just ahead of the expected rainy season at 0.5–4 kg/ha at 1 cm depth and cover

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

**Weeding**—weed twice after planting at monthly intervals during establishment

**Harvesting**—makes reasonable-quality hay when cut in the early flowering stage. Cuttings at 10 cm at intervals of 20 days in a wet year and at 30 days intervals in a dry year is recommended

## Performance

Expect about 24 t/ha dry matter with complete fertilization and about 9 t/ha dry matter from unfertilized farms. Crude protein when cut in the early flowering stage is 6–10%

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

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