



Napier or elephant grass ILRI 14984 (*Pennisetum purpureum*) for livestock feed on small-scale farms

Objective

To provide high quality cut and carry feed for livestock in the subhumid middle altitudes

Description

- Very tall perennial grass which tends to become coarse as it matures
- Vigorous deep rooted grass which tolerates limited dry spells
- Tolerates poor drainage
- Good for soil stability and as a wind break
- Fast growing and good palatability in early growth stage if cut often
- Useful for cut and carry, hay or silage

Limits of use

- Not adapted to areas with frost
- Not suited to waterlogged areas
- Will not persist without fertilizer
- Coarse, fibrous and sharp leaves if not cut frequently

Management

Field preparation—ploughed field but can be used for zero tillage

Establishment—stem cuttings of 2–3 nodes planted at 50 cm spacing

Fertilizer—apply 100 kg urea or manure per hectare after each cut

Weeding—after establishment and every cut

Harvesting—cut at 5 cm 3 times per year, or every 3 months if good growth

Performance

Expect about 40 t/ha fresh forage for cut and carry. Protein content of the forage is about 9%

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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