

# Establishing and managing Brachiaria grass for high herbage Production

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## Why grow Brachiaria grass?

- Brachiaria grass is a high yielding forage (6-18 t/ha/ year).
- It is highly nutritious with crude protein of up to 17%.
- Is drought tolerant and can withstand drought for 4 months.
- Brachiaria is highly palatable.
- It is a good carbon sink.



## Which varieties are suitable?

- *Brachiaria decumbens* cv. Basilisk
- *Brachiaria brizantha* cv. Xaraes (Toledo)
- *Brachiaria brizantha* cv. MG-4
- *Brachiaria brizantha* cv. Piata
- *Brachiaria hybrid* cv. Mullato II (suitable for coastal region)

## Where to grow Brachiaria grass?

- Brachiaria grass grows well in areas where annual rainfall is above 700 mm and mean temperatures that exceed 19°C.
- The grass requires well drained and deep soils.

## Planting using seeds

- Brachiaria should be planted at the onset of rains.
- Make shallow fallows that are 1 - 1.5 cm deep, spaced at 50 cm from row to row using a hand hoe or a furrow opener.



- Apply TSP fertilizer at a rate of 200 - 250 kg (4 – 5 bags) per ha or apply well cured manure (5 - 10 t/ha) and mix with the soil.
- Drill the seeds by hand along the furrows at the rate of 5 - 7 kg/ha and cover lightly with the soil.

## Planting using root splits

Plant 2 to 3 tillers per hole at a spacing of 50 cm between rows and 20 - 30 cm within the rows.



## How to weed

- After the grasses emerge, hand weed as the weeds appear.
- Broad leaved weeds can be controlled by application of herbicides.

## Harvesting Brachiaria grass

- The first harvest should be done 3-4 months after seedlings emergence by cutting the grass at a height of about 5 cm above the ground or direct grazing.
- Subsequent harvests can be done after every 8-10 weeks (2 - 2½ months).
- Apply 200 kg (4 bags) of CAN per ha/season.



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