







Range grasses factsheet

Cenchrus ciliaris (African foxtail grass)

			
<p><i>C. ciliaris</i> crop at KALRO Kiboko seed multiplication plots</p>	<p>A young establishment of <i>C. ciliaris</i> at experimental plots at KALRO Kiboko</p>	<p><i>C. ciliaris</i> with purple inflorescence</p>	<p>Bales of harvested of <i>C. ciliaris</i> at KALRO Perkera</p>
<p>Common names</p>	<p>Scientific name</p>	<p>Synonyms</p>	<p>Family/tribe</p>
<p><i>African foxtail grass, buffelgrass</i></p>	<p><i>Cenchrus ciliaris</i></p>	<p><i>Pennisetum ciliare</i></p>	<p><i>Poaceae</i></p>
<p>Description</p>	<p>It is a perennial, tufted and sometimes spreading species that occurs from 0 – 2000 m A.S.L. Extremely variable species. Deep, strong, fibrous rooting system to more than 2 m.</p>		
<p>Distribution</p>	<p>Arid and semi-arid counties of Kenya</p>		
<p>Ecology</p>	<p>It forms understory of bushlands in natural environments. Prefers black cotton soils.</p> <p>Tolerant to grazing pressure, fire and extremely drought tolerant Less tolerant to salinity, waterlogging and slightly to the shade</p>		
<p>Agronomy</p>	<p>Establishment: - Land preparation should be completed just before the rains begin in the ASALs from beginning to mid-October in the Southern Rangelands and late February to mid-March in the Northern counties. Preparation methods include – use of ox-plough, range pits, no-till and mechanized land preparation</p> <p>Planting is carried out through broadcasting and drilling in furrows at 5kg/ha and adjusted according to seed germination capacity. Spreads well by seed and easily covers the ground through rhizomes It can be planted in mixtures with other range grasses such as <i>Enteropogon macrostachyus</i>, <i>Chloris roxburghiana</i> and <i>Eragrostis superba</i></p> <p>Weed control: Very important during the first year. Done by hand by either uprooting or using a hoe or use of selective herbicides</p> <p>Harvesting and storage: A good seeder. Up to 10-60 kg/ha of clean seed</p>		

	per harvest. The seeds are harvested when they show signs of browning (straw-like colour) before the start of seed fall by stripping the ripe panicles. Carried out during dry conditions. The seeds are stored in air dry conditions away from moisture and rodents.
Production potential/ Feeding value	<p>Nutritive value: protein content (CP) of 6-12 percent of dry matter when young. Crude protein at seed maturity is 4-6%</p> <p>Highly Palatability</p> <p>Toxicity : has high oxalate content causing bighead disease in horses especially when young and lush</p> <p>Dry matter Yield: varies between varieties. Yields up to 2 500 kg/ha per cut when young. can yield over 20tons/ha/yr with fertilizer</p>
Varieties	Biloela, Molopo, Gayndar etc.
Source of Seed	For wild collections, KALRO Kiboko and partners such as farmer groups
Reference Links – book, journal paper, magazine, brochure, bulletin, fact sheet, web etc	<p>http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/AGPC/doc/Gbase/data/Pf000196.HTM</p> <p>Heuzé V., Tran G., Baumont R., Lebas F., 2016. <i>Buffel grass (Cenchrus ciliaris)</i>. Feedipedia, a programme by INRA, CIRAD, AFZ and FAO. http://www.feedipedia.org/node/482 Last updated on April 1, 2016, 17:12</p>