GROW GIANT SETARIA GRASS FOR INCREASED MILK PRODUCTION IN AREAS PRONE TO NAPIER STUNT DISEASE


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Introduction

- Giant *Setaria* is a good fodder grass that is not infected by Napier stunt and head smut diseases
- It is an alternative fodder crop which grows well in low and high altitude regions of Kenya
- It is 3rd to Napier in biomass production, with dry matter yields of 4 tonnes per acre in a year
- It can be used for fodder production and soil conservation when planted along contour lines

Where to grow it

- In areas where Napier stunt is prevalent
- Along contour lines as a soil conservation measure
- Low to medium altitude areas with 1000-2500 mm of rainfall per year

Source of Giant *setaria* seed splits

- KARI Centres.
- Ministry of Agriculture
- Farmers with the grass

How to plant Giant *setaria*

- Get root splits for planting from an already established healthy field

Root splits for planting

- Plant single root split per hole at a spacing of 50 x 50 cm from hole to hole and from plant to plant
- Apply TSP/DAP fertiliser at the rate of one bottle-top per hole (one bag TSP/DAP or 2 bags of SSP per acre) or FYM/compost manure at the rate of 2 handfuls per hole (4 tonnes FYM/compost) per acre at planting
- Cover firmly with soil

How to manage Giant *setaria*

- Harvest by cutting 3-4 months after planting
- Leave a stubble height of 5 cm from ground level

Benefits of Giant *setaria*

- It is not infected by Napier stunt
- Produces 75% of the forage produced by the best Napier grass variety, hence can be used as an alternative in areas prone to stunt disease
- Direct feeding of cows or sold for cash income
- Easily conserved as silage for dry season feeding
- Leafy, palatable and high nutritive value of 10-12% crude protein
- Faster re-growths after harvesting

How to utilise Giant *setaria*

- Chop at 2-3 cm and feed fresh to livestock
- It is not good for making hay but is good for silage making