Growing maize for food and fodder

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Well fed cow

More milk
Using the above strategies, it is possible to get extra forage to feed a 350kg cow for the length of feeding period shown below:

### Introduction:

The use of maize forage for animal feeding is becoming very important on small scale mixed farms in Kenya. This type of forage contributes up to 24% of the total cattle feed thus making maize production for grain and fodder equally important.

### Management of dual purpose maize

This involves harvesting maize at various stages for grain and good quality forage. The stages are at knee high, at milk stage, dough stage and grain harvest for dry stover.

1) **Dense planting:**

This may be achieved by
- planting more than one seed to get more plants per hole
- Reducing plant spacing.

Farmers use various strategies to obtain extra fodder which include.

2) **Disease resistant varieties to reduce forage loss**

Use of resistant maize varieties ensures a sustainable supply of quality forage throughout the dry season. Resistant maize varieties could save up to 40% of forage from maize (thinnings and stover) lost due to early maize streak virus disease (MSVD) infection.

3) **Dual purpose maize varieties**

These are maize varieties that are:
- Suitable for both grain and fodder:
  - An example is KH500 – 43A which is, resistant to maize streak disease, very leafy has good taste when boiled.

It is late maturing and therefore does well in medium moist areas.

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**High forage variety**

**Thinnings obtained from a maize crop**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Land size</th>
<th>Forage type</th>
<th>Dry Matter (Kg)</th>
<th>Period (days)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.17ha*</td>
<td>Thinnings</td>
<td>395-759</td>
<td>64-117 days (2-3mths)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.17ha*</td>
<td>Green stover</td>
<td>24-153</td>
<td>4-27 days (1 mth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total feeding period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>68 – 144 days (2-5mths)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 0.17ha is the average land size committed to maize in densely populated Kenyan Highlands and the yields are for short and long rain seasons.