Growing maize for food and fodder

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**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, milk stage, dough stage and grain harvest for dry stover.

**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 (MMSVD) 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.

The 2 practices may increase fodder quantity by up to 140%. Dense plantings necessitate strategies to replenish soil nutrients.

<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>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total feeding period</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>68 - 144 days (2-3mths)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

High forage variety

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