

A sorghum crop ratooned 4 weeks after harvest produces half a *debe*/acre and sometimes no harvests are obtained.



Poor harvest



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**Ratoon (cut back)  
sorghum for  
increased harvest**



## Introduction

### What is sorghum ratooning (cutback)

It is a process where sorghum stalks are cut back just above ground level after harvest to stimulate growth of new shoots and hence a new crop.

Improved sorghum varieties like Gadam, Serena, Seredo, and KARI Mtama-I have ability to re-grow after cutting back.

### Why ratoon Sorghum?

- A ratoon crop does not require seeds for planting in the long rain season.
- A ratoon crop matures 20-30 days earlier compared to a newly planted crop.
- When the rains fail or are poor, the farmer who ratoons harvests something while the one who plants a new crop harvest nothing.

### Initial Sorghum crop

The initial sorghum crop should be grown according to the recommended agronomic practices.

### Step 1: Harvesting initial crop

Harvest the initial crop by cutting the head and leave the stalk standing.



Harvesting initial crop

### Step 2: Cutting back stalks

Within one week of harvesting, cut back the sorghum stalks above ground level and new shoots will grow. Do not delay cutting until stalks dry.



Cutting back sorghum

### Step 3: Field management

After ratooning, remove the cut sorghum stalks from the field to reduce stalk borer infestation.

Weed the new sorghum crop and mulch the soil surface to retain soil moisture.

### Step 4: Harvesting the ratoon

When the grains are ready, harvest same way as the first crop.

Ratooning sorghum within one week after harvesting produces an extra 4 bags/acre of sorghum compared to late ratooning or no ratooning.



Good harvest