INTRODUCTION

The southern highland of Tanzania is one of the potential areas for dairy activities in the country. It has a high number of dairy cows. Feed shortage is the major drawback to the success of this sector in these areas. The areas under the assessment were three districts, Njombe (Ikuna and Kichiwa wards), Rungwe (Lufingo and Kiwira wards) and Muindi (Igwole and Mtwango wards).

Forage scoring by farmers at farmer-led trials was done in six wards. This coincided with wet season in the areas.

As a group in each ward, the farmers generated forage evaluation criteria considered important in determining preferable forage in farmers’ context. During evaluation available farmers within each ward moved across the plots scoring individually for all the forages against the already generated criteria.

Objective

Farmers assessing forage performance at their district levels for preference.

Forage treatments

1. Guatemala (Control),
2. Napier IRRI 16835 + Lablab,
3. Napier IRRI 16835,
4. Brachiaria Cayman,
5. Brachiaria Cayman + Desmodium,
6. Brachiaria Cayman + Stylo,
7. Brachiaria Cobra,
8. Brachiaria Cobra + Desmodium,
9. Brachiaria Cobra + Stylo,
10. Napier-Ouma,
11. Napier-Ouma + Lablab,
12. Rhodes grass,
13. Rhodes grass + Desmodium,
14. Rhodes grass + Stylo,
15. Rhodes grass + Stylosanthes,
16. Rhodes grass + Stylosanthes intercropped with lablab,
17. Rhodes grass + Stylosanthes intercropped with Napier (ILRI 16835),
18. Rhodes grass + Stylosanthes intercropped with Napier (ILRI 16835),
19. Rhodes grass + Stylosanthes intercropped with Ouma,
20. Rhodes grass + Stylosanthes intercropped with Ouma + Lablab,
21. Rhodes grass + Stylosanthes intercropped with Ouma + Desmodium

Farmer developed criteria for scoring

IKUNA WARD
1. Fast germination
2. Increase milk yield
3. Satisfy animal fast
4. With high
5. Without pests
6. Liked by animals

KICHIWA WARD
1. Fast germination
2. Increase milk yield
3. Satisfy animal fast
4. Softness
5. Without disease
6. Fast regrowth
7. Liked by animals

IGWOLE WARD
1. Easy to store
2. Fast regrowth
3. Greenness
4. High yield
5. Mixed grasses
6. More tillers
7. More weight
8. Pest resistance
9. Softness
10. Liked by animals

MTWANGO WARD
1. Easy to carry
2. Ease to store
3. Fast germination
4. Fast regrowth
5. Greenness
6. High quality
7. Satisfy animals
8. Softness
9. Without diseases
10. Liked by animals

LUFINGO WARD
1. Many leaves
2. Easy of establishment
3. Fast regrowth
4. Increase milk yield
5. Liked by animals
6. Soft leaves
7. Quality

KIWIRA WARD
1. Easy to carry
2. High yield
3. Pest resistance
4. Stabilize animal health
5. Easy of establishment
6. Increase milk yield
7. Liked by animals
8. with quality by the look

Findings

Forage treatments tested in Mtwango wards were:

- Napier (Ouma) intercropped with lablab, Brachiaria hybrid cobra intercropped with Stylosanthes guanensis and Desmodium intertortum were the best choices for the farmers.
- Guatemala and Rhodes grasses were least liked (with low scores) by the farmers.
- Igwole ward
- Rhodes grass intercropped with Desmodium intertortum was the best choices. The other three followed were Brachiaria hybrid Cayman intercropped with Stylosanthes guanensis, Rhodes grass intercropped with Stylosanthes guanensis. Guatemala was the least liked.
- Kichiwa ward
- Rhodes grass intercropped with Stylosanthes guanensis and Brachiaria hybrid Cayman were the best.
- Other best were Brachiaria hybrid Cayman intercropped with Stylosanthes guanensis, Brachiaria hybrid Cobra intercropped with Stylosanthes guanensis, Napier (Ouma) intercropped with Lablab, Napier (Ouma) and Rhodes grass intercropped with Desmodium intertortum.
- The least liked was Guatemala.
- Ikuna ward
- Brachiaria hybrid Cayman was the best with the highest scores. The other two were Brachiaria hybrid Cobra and Napier (ILRI 16835).
- The least liked (with the least scores) were Brachiaria hybrid Cayman intercropped with Stylosanthes guanensis and Napier (Ouma).

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