

Entrepreneurship development potential of perennial forages

under rainfed semi-arid central India: a case study

D R Palsaniya¹, T Kiran Kumar², Suchit K Rai³, Mukesh Choudhary⁴ and Sunil Kumar⁵

ICAR-Indian Grassland and Fodder Research Institute, Jhansi 284 003, Uttar Pradesh

Perennial grasses like Napier Bajra hybrid, guinea and tri specific hybrid are important source of round the year green fodder. Their demand is increasing in recent year particularly from dairy farmer, peri-urban milkshed area, Gaushala, forest department, NGOs, etc. Farmer can plant rooted slips of the forage in July, take fodder for the whole year and then sale rooted slips in next July and August to get higher return. The paper assessed the multiplication behaviour, fodder production and entrepreneurship development potential of perennial forage crop under rainfed semi arid central Indian condition in this case study.

Key words: Entrepreneurship development, Perennial forages, Semi arid

Indian agriculture is an economic symbiosis of crop and livestock production. Livestock sector is contributing 24.72 and 4.36% to the agricultural and overall GDP, respectively. It plays an important role in livelihood security of farmers particularly in arid and semi arid region of India. Availability of quality feed and forage has been considered as the major bottleneck in harnessing the potential of the livestock productivity. The farmers in semi arid tropic are almost deficit in green nutritive fodder and there is ever increasing demand for quality green forage. Fodder and feed are known to constitute about 60% of the total cost of milk production. The major part of livestock feed is met either from crop by products (rice, wheat, barley, bajra, sorghum straw/stover and other crop residue) or from the less nutritious grass leading to low production and productivity of livestock. To maximize the milk production, it is essential to feed animals with quality green fodder.

NB Hybrid, Trispecific hybrid (TSH) and guinea grass are the most important perennial grasses in semi arid tropic. NB Hybrid grass is a potential perennial source of green fodder and it is popular owing to high yield, palatability and adaptability to varying climatic conditions. Trispecific hybrid (cross between three species *Pennisetum purpureum* × *P. squamulatum* × *P. glaucum*) has great potential for green forage production along with quality throughout the year under rainfed and irrigated condition. Guinea grass (*Panicum maximum* Jacq.) is one of the important pasture species suitable for higher forage production from community land, village grazing land and marginal land owned by the farmers. It has profuse tillers, quick regeneration and high leaf-stem ratio provides highly nutritious, digestible and palatable forage. Looking into these facts, a number of high yielding and nutritive varieties of Napier-Bajra hybrid, Tri Specific Hybrid (TSH) and guinea

grass have been developed in our country. These grasses have immense potential for green fodder production throughout the year.

However, Napier-Bajra hybrid, Tri Specific Hybrid (TSH), etc does not produce much viable seed so propagation is carried out through vegetative means (rooted slip and stem cutting) for faster establishment. Propagation by cutting also results in plants that are genetically identical to the parent plant. Very few information on its multiplication performance, tillering and also yield is available under rainfed condition, hence an attempt has been made through this field investigation. The increasing demand of rooted slips for above grasses particularly by dairy farmer, peri-urban farmer, government agency and department, forest department and NGOs in recent times opens new vistas for entrepreneurship development through perennial forage multiplication, and sale. Therefore, in present case study,