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Napier: Miraculous fodder grass

for the dry hot regions of Western Rajasthan

Ishwar Singh[1], S K Singh[2], Mahendra Kumar[3], Shilpa Kumari[4] and Garbar Singh[5]

Directorate of Extension Education, Agriculture University, Mandor Campus, Jodhpur 342 304 Rajasthan

The farmers of Western Rajasthan faces shortage of green fodder during extreme summer season. Productivity of Lucerne and other green grasses reduced during summer and repeated irrigations are required to take sufficient green fodder from these crops. Napier grass as green fodder can be a good alternate under these circumstances. With this objective, it was introduced at 20 farmer's sites in 2 successive years during 2018-19 and 19-20. Results were very encouraging. Napier grown under drip irrigation system saved good quantity of water and provided huge quantity of green fodder for the cattles reared at every farm in the area. This technology has a horizontal expansion of more than 200 farmers of nearby areas.

Key words: Drip irrigation, Extreme Summer, Green Fodder, Napier

LUCERNE and fodder sorghum has begin to grown by the farmers of the FFP Villages: Balarwa, Manai and Binjwadia in Jodhpur District of Rajasthan. Intense heat and high blowing dry winds during summer season significantly reduces the growth of crops and repeated irrigation are required at very short intervals of 5-6 days to obtain sufficient green fodder from Lucerne and sorghum. During the *Zaid* season, irrigation water becomes an important commodity especially in summers in the *Thar Desert* areas. In spites of all efforts, farmer did not get required quantity of green fodder of his milch animals.

Napier grass is a hybrid grass known for high value crude protein ranging from 8-11% with 28-30.5% crude fibre and 10-11.5% ash on dry matter basis. Napier is a perennial grass which thrives very well and provide huge amount of green fodder especially under the harsh climatic condition of summers in desert. The suckers once planted in the field continuously provide green fodder for 4-5 years and the row of grass standing in field can easily be irrigated through drip liners. Whereas, lucerne and green fodder grows satisfactorily under check basin condition where almost double quantity of water required compare to drip liners.

The performance of different varieties and hybrids of napier grass were compared at KVK, Pali, Marwar in Rajasthan and the idea to introduce this grass in adopted

Napier variety Co-4 grown at farmer's field in Villae Balarwa, Manai and Binjwadia in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.