

# Successful cultivation of Guinea grass in arid region of Rajasthan

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**G**UINEA grass (*Panicum maximum* Jacq.) is an important perennial fodder grass to give green fodder round the year. But its cultivation in arid western region of Rajasthan state is not common. For successful and beneficial animal husbandry by the farmers, cultivation of green fodder is important to provide green fodder to the animals throughout the year. The arid region of Rajasthan state covers the area towards western side of Aravali range of hills, which divides the state almost in two parts viz. eastern and western. Animal husbandry and forage management is an uphill task for the farmers of this region. The reason is that at many places annual rainfall is below 250 mm. Farmers can take only one crop in rainy season because irrigation water is not available in most of the area for the remaining part of the year. At present, where irrigation facility is available by tube wells and canal water, the farmers should grow green fodder for the animals to take maximum advantage.

To know suitability of this grass in arid region of western Rajasthan, a trial (Varietal Trial in Guinea Grass-2007 of AICRP on Forage Crops) was grown at Agricultural Research Station, Bikaner of S. K. Rajasthan Agricultural University in the year

2008. Five entries of guinea grass were taken in the trial. For planting material of the grass, the seed was first sown in nursery in July. When the plants attained sufficient growth in nursery they were transferred to a field in a trial in RBD with four replications in December, 2008. Row to row spacing was 50 cm and plant

to plant spacing was also kept 50 cm. The trial was conducted in irrigated condition and regular irrigations were given at an interval of about 15 days. Weeding and hoeing in trial was also done.

After transplanting, maximum green fodder harvested was 494.37 q/ha during 2009 from the entry



Guinea grass growing in field at Agricultural Research Station, Bikaner

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*Feeding of green fodder to animals mixed with dry fodder is important in many ways. It is necessary for balanced nutrition of animals. By giving the right nutrition it saves animals from many diseases. Green fodder is cheaper in comparison to feeding by concentrates to the animals. Complete use of dry fodder is achieved by mixing green fodder, because it increases palatability for the animals.*

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