

Teff grass: *eragrostis tef*.

Annual summer C4 grass, with fine, leafy forage with excellent quality- well suited to grazing, silage or hay for all livestock classes. Originating from Ethiopia.

SOWING

Sow/broadcast after frost danger when soil temp is above 18 C. Will be terminated by frost.

Sowing into a firm seed bed at 3-6 mm is essential for stand establishment. Anecdotal evidence suggests broadcasting and rolling can also be effective.

Rolling after sowing or broadcasting gives better seed soil contact and boosts establishment.

Sowing rate: 3-6 kg/ha. Teff should emerge within 5 days.

Teff has performed well on sandy to high clay soils and acidic soils and is a low input crop with a maximum of 100 kg Urea or equivalent required for high yields. If after a pulse crop, little or no additional fert required.

Handles salinity similarly to lucerne.

GROWTH

Teff prefers a rainfall of 450 mm + and has an optimal growing temp of 10 C to 27 C. Once established, teff is fairly drought hardy but thrives on irrigated country.

Teff grows rapidly and early booting can occur in 5 weeks after sowing with subsequent cuts or grazings possible approximately a month after the first cut/graze. Teff is said to reduce grazing issues as it reportedly contains no prussic acid or high nitrate levels during early growth stages.

There are few labelled herbicides so ensure that weeds are controlled in the prior crop and manage teff to ensure that it provides competition. If there is a two week window of favourable weather after sowing the teff will outcompete most weeds.

FORAGE HARVEST

Teff harvest should occur when the crop is around 70 cm- 1 m high, before seed heads appear. Teff should be cut at 10 cm + to allow for rapid regrowth for subsequent cuts or grazings.

Single harvest hay yields can be 3-5 t/ha and 4-7 t/ha when planting improved varieties. Multiple (3) cuts of hay deliver around 10 t of high quality fodder/ha (irrigated).

Teff is a soft forage, with 9-14% protein and an NDF of 53-56%- which is similar to timothy hay. The hay is high in calcium, phosphorus, iron and trace elements.

In Tasmania, trials pinpointed mid-November as an optimal sowing timing and harvested 1.7 t of seed and 11 t of straw/forage from brown and ivory varieties.

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