

Fodder Farming for Profit efficiency of dairy farmers in Kenya – Part 3

Wilting is the process of leaving a crop in the open to dry after being cut. The crop is then collected and used as a silage and helps in obtaining more dry feeds.

Harvesting of what you need is first done and then spread it on the sun for a few hours to wilt. Chop and mix wilted crop with other forages such as maize stovers or napier grass then feed to the animals. A cow can feed up to 70 kg per day of wet fodder but for dry fodder, a cow can feed on 20 kg only. Feeding wet fodder to animals leads to high constipation especially for calves. Edible cassava too can be used for fodder as their leaves are rich in vitamins and proteins of about 16%-18%.

Utilising cassava

When making silage you can opt to mix cassava leaves with napier silage or maize silage to boost protein levels. Cassava seed are not used hence choose the re shooting part of cassava.

Cassava is for dairy goats as it substitutes the protein.

More diversity

Calliandra calothyrsus known as calliandra tree is a useful fodder shrub that can be grown. It is a thornless leguminous fodder shrub that can be used as a substitute for commercial dairy meal. It's easy to grow and manage, grows fast, tolerant to acidic soil and helps fix nitrogen in the soil.

When feeding animals, give 2kg-4kg per day per head and when

the tree flowers the nutritional value lowers. The protein content is about 15%-25% hence the younger the more nutritious it is.

Calliandra benefits

It's beneficial to goats since they are browser thus they get good protein, energy and minerals from it. It increases milk production in goats from 1 litre -2 litres per day. Calliandra is important in improving soil nutrient levels, reforestation of bare areas prone to soil erosion.

It's also good for fuel as it grows quickly, burns well and can produce charcoal. Leaves can be used for mulching and as green manure as they add nitrogen to the soil.