



MEKONG BRIZANTHA

Brachiaria brizantha

Mekong Brizantha is a relatively new cultivar to the Australian pasture market. Originating from South America, this species is being used to replace much of their existing Brachiaria decumbens (Signal Grass) pastures mainly due to its production capabilities.

Checklist

- ✓ **True tropical grass species**
- ✓ **Tolerant to periods of water logging**
- ✓ **High dry matter production**
- ✓ **Tufted species**
- ✓ **Suitable for intensive grazing systems**
- ✓ **Should be dual planted with Signal Grass or Callide Rhodes Grass**
- ✓ **Grows on a wide range of soil types**
- ✓ **Sowing Rate - 15-30 ENVIROGRO™ pellets per square metre or depending on pure seed count 3-6kg/ha in combination planting**

Environment

Mekong Brizantha is a true tropical grass species requiring greater than 1000mm of summer dominant annual rainfall. There is potential for production under irrigation where annual rainfall is less than this. It is best suited to coastal growing conditions but can grow in tropical regions in altitudes up to 2000m. Although leaves are sensitive to frost, plants will typically recover from light frosts.

Soil Type

Mekong Brizantha will grow on a wide range of soil types from sandy loams through to heavier free draining clay soils with soil pH between 4-8. Mekong has shown that it is able to handle high levels of soil Aluminium, common with acid soils below pH 5. While free draining soils are preferred, Mekong Brizantha can withstand periodic water logging for up to one month at a time. In order to achieve full production potential from the Mekong Brizantha, soil fertility needs to be

relatively high and annual supplementary fertilizer applications may be necessary.

Establishment

Accessing quality Mekong Brizantha seed is a very difficult proposition. Because of the nature of the seed development, up to 50% of the seed produced is often empty or of extremely low quality. To overcome this issue, Southedge Seeds has used its de-gluming technology to remove any unviable seed and in the process has reduced the level of in-built dormancy present.

It is recommended that Mekong Brizantha be planted in combination with Signal Grass or Rhodes Grass, similar to the recommendations for Humidicola, to provide quick feed and ground cover whilst the Mekong Brizantha is establishing. The broad leaf of the Mekong Brizantha makes it easy to identify when it is sown with Signal Grass and sowing rates will be dependent upon the desired plant density.



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