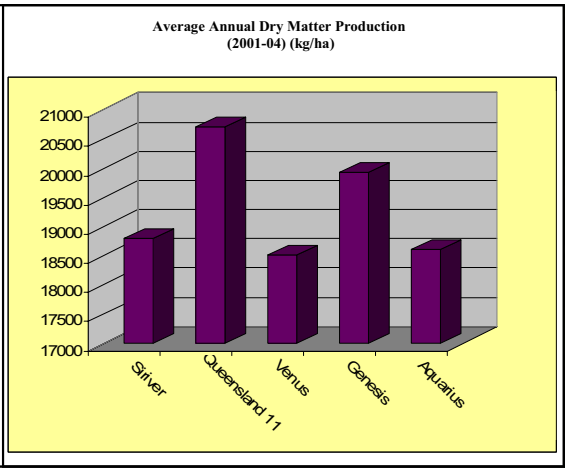
Pastures For Fodder Production

Queensland 11™ Lucerne

Queensland 11™ Lucerne is a newly released lucerne cultivar exclusive to Southedge Seeds that has been selected primarily for its dry matter production. Queensland 11™ is ideally suited to the sub tropical growing environment that we experience in all of Queenslands' lucerne growing regions. With a winter activity rating of 10, Queensland 11™ provides you with every opportunity to produce high quality lucerne hay all year round and take advantage of the traditionally high winter hay prices. The insect and disease resistance rating of Queenlander 11™ is similar to what you would expect to see from most highly winter active lucernes. Early trial data has shown that Queensland 11™ lucerne is amongst the highest yielding highly winter active lucernes on the market. Queensland 11™ lucerne stands will remain productive for 3 years after which time it is advised to rotate with either a cereal or a grass species to take advantage of the soil fixed nitrogen.



Stylhay™

Stylhay™ has earnt the reputation of being the substitute for lucerne in the tropics. Being a strictly tropical species, plant growth is generally restricted to spring and summer with some plant growth into Autumn. However, growth has been noted where moisture has been available during mild winters. Management of a Stylhay™ crop for hay production, is somewhat similar to those required for lucerne, as crown shoots do need to be monitiored as to the best time for cutting. If the crop is allowed to grow rank, crown shoot will be shaded and as such the plants will struggle to reshoot once cut for hay. Establishing early in the first year is essential to maximise the chances of increased cuts. The light trimming of plants once 10" tall in an establishing stand will promote the plants to branch out and increase leaf to stem ratio. Stylhay™ fits in well with most cropping rotations on the wet tropical coast, as broadleaf weeds can be easily controlled with 2,4-D herbicide.

Katambora Rhodes Grass

Katambora Rhodes Grass is possibly the most common grass species grown for hay production in tropical and sub tropical regions. It's ability to provide production nearly year round is attractive to many producers, combined with the relatively high dry matter yields. The key to producing high quality Katambora hay is a strict cutting regime coupled with a finely tuned fertiliser and irrigation program. Planting legumes such as Aztec Atro and Lucerne in combination with Katambora will aid in lifting feed values.

Other Species

Fodder production is not just restricted to the four pasture species, however, these cultivars that are mentioned are possibly the most commonly used and most valuable pasture species for tropical and sub-tropical hay production. If you want to get technical, any grass or legume species could be used for fodder production, however, the quantity and the quality of the forage produced is largely determined by the management of the crop prior to cutting for hay. Once tropical grass species are allowed to reach flag leaf development, the fibre content of that grass increases dramatically, the digestible protein levels drop, and the feed value ends up being similar to that of dry roughage. Legume crops behave the same way, whilst they might start with a higher protein content than that of grass. Tannin levels increase as plants get older reducing the digestibility of the fodder, and as such animals are restricted by how much they can consume and animal performance is restricted as a result. Considerable time, money and risk is involved in producing hay, and ultimately the quality rather that quantity will determine the animal performance which will drive the overall value of that hay.

COMMODITY	Stylhay	
TEST IDENT.	**RESULTS**	**UNITS**
Moisture	26.7	%
Protein	20.1	%
Acid Detergent Fibre	36.5	%
Neutral Detergent Fibre	42.8	%
Digestible Protein	14.0	%
Digestible Dry Matter	63.5	%
Total Digestible Nutrients	60.1	%
DM Intake % of Body Weight	2.8	
Net Energy Lactation	5.7	MJ /kg
Net Energy Gain	3.1	MJ /kg
Net Energy Maintenance	6.1	MJ /kg
Relative Feed Value	131.0	
Metabolizable Energy	9.1	MJ / kg
Results are on a 'Dry Matter' basis		
Protein is N% x 6.25		

Jarra Grass

Jarra Grass is quite possibly the best tropical grass that could be used for hay production. Its soft leaf and high leaf : stem ratio, means that the hay produced off Jarra Grass is well accepted by all animals and generally is of the highest quality. Being a tropical grass species, growth will not commence until late spring/early summer when reasonable day time temperatures combined with the first rains for the season ignites plant growth. The amount of dry matter produced from a good Jarra stand during the warm half of the year will out yield Rhodes grass production for the same period. Like all grasses used for hay production, nitrogen fertiliser is essential to optimize plant growth and ultimately dry matter yields. Jarra Grass grows best on well drained soils, and will not tolerate long periods of water logging. Atrazine is able to be used in the establishing year to manage any weed infestation. The use of Brush-Off Herbicide is not recommended. Southedge Seeds is the only producer of certified Jarra Grass seed in Queensland.

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