



FAQs on Napier Grass as Alternative Feed

FAQDR 001

1. What is Napier grass?

Hybrid Napier grass(CO-3) is a perennial plant that is a cross breed between Pennisetum purpureum (elephant grass) and Pennisetum americanum. It grows really tall with vigorous vegetative growth (at least 2 meters at maturity) and can survive in diverse soil types. It is popularly used as feed for cattle in East African, Asia and other parts of the world.

2. How do I plant Napier?

Napier can be planted by stem cuttings or by root slips. Napier planted by stem cuttings or root slips is easier to establish. Buy mature stems of Napier grass, cut the stem into sections with at least two to three nodes each and insert the cuttings in an already prepared (cleared and tilled) soil.

3. How long does it take before you can harvest Napier?

It takes about 90 - 100 days after planting to harvest Napier depending on the rainfall pattern of the area.

4. How do I ensure my Napier grows?

Napier is a medium maintenance plant. It requires weeding and can survive with weekly watering. If Napier is attacked by termites, the termites can be exterminated by applying a pesticide recommended by an agronomist.

5. Why is Napier better than conventional grass?

It has more tillering effect than most grasses that is fed to cattle. The young grown Napier at less than 1-meter height has more energy & protein content than most grasses grown within Nigeria. It is also ranked amongst the highest yielding pasture per hectare and very nutritious to cows. It has also been proven by BIF to increase milk yield by over 150% when fed to lactating cows at a minimum quantity of about 15-20 kg fresh weight per cow depending on its weight.

6. Is Napier more economical than conventional grass?

Napier has also been found to be much more economical than the conventional grass because it has a regenerative ability of about 40-50 days after every harvest within the rainy season and averages about 150 - 200 tons per hectare. Napier grass is also perennial once established and can last for about 5 years if well maintained. Furthermore, one Napier cutting costs N20 and 1 kg Napier fodder cost about N5 - N10 and requires weeding only 2 times during establishment in the raining season. Once fully established, it has the ability to dominate other grasses hence less weeding is required subsequently. It also needs fertilizer application preferably Cattle /poultry manure after every harvest and can regrow at least 3 -4 more times within the raining season and if irrigated, it can regrow 5-6 times within a year after each harvest.



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7. How do feed Napier to my cows?

Feeding of napier grass to livestock is achieved through cut and carry. It is best to cut Napier before feeding it to cows. Allowing cows to graze directly may destroy the plant and contaminate the Napier fodder with their faeces. It can also shorten the perennial nature of the plant.

8. Can Napier be cut and stored for future use?

Yes, Napier can be cut, mixed with molasses and stored in pits as silage for use during the dry season when there is limited pasture. It can also be cut and stored as hay but needs to be enhanced during feeding because of the low nutritive content in that form.

9. Does Napier grow in dry season?

With regular watering/irrigation Napier can grow all year round inclusive of dry season.

10. How much Napier do I have to plant to feed ten cows for one year?

One hectare of napier grass is enough to feed about 15 – 20 cows per year depending on their body weight and age.

11. Can I feed my goats and sheep Napier?

Yes, Napier is nutritious feed for most ruminant animals including goats and sheep and one hectare can comfortably feed over 50 sheep & goat per annum.

12. I live in South-East Nigeria, does Napier grow in the rainforest?

Napier has also been found to be much more economical than the cNapier grows excellently well in both South east and South western Nigeria due to prolonged rainy season. It is usually a versatile plant growing in varying degree of soil types. The grass is able to adapt to a wide range of vegetation belts including the rainforest.

13. Where can I buy Napier seedlings?

Napier cuttings are sold by the Ballol-Ndurgol Co-operative Union of the Ladugga – Kachia Grazing Reserve, Kaduna State. Mallam Saliyu Yunusa 09094687885 is the contact person. Also, NASRUN Nig. Ltd another commercial grower facilitated by BIF in Jere Kaduna state sells Napier seedlings and can be reached on 08034228381 (Dr. Dahiru Murtala)