



HOW TO EXPLOIT A NEW LUCRATIVE SEGMENT OF THE DAIRY & LIVESTOCK SECTOR GROWING HYBRID NAPIER GRASS

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Making Napier available all year round would meet with a huge market demand from pastoralists who are estimated

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are in dire need of feed for their cattle particularly in dry season.

During the dry season, pastoralists witness a drop in the amount of milk yield from their cows. The cause of the drop-in milk yield can be attributed to the scarcity of water and green pasture that characterizes the dry period. With less rainfall, tensions run high and the scramble for available fodder becomes more intense. As challenging as this situation is, it also represents an opportunity for business. The business of making good quality fodder available regardless of the season. BIF's Napier innovation represents such an opportunity. *Aside from providing good quality feed for cattle, Napier is more nourishing and has a positive effect on the volume of milk yield of cows fed on it.* Making Napier available all year round would meet with a huge market demand from pastoralists who are estimated at 12 million in number and are in dire need of feed for their cattle particularly in dry season.

The economic potentials of Napier Grass as a lucrative business are enormous. The market segment for Napier feed provision covers not only pastoralists and their cows but extends to other agribusinesses that rear ruminants (small or large) since Napier is also nutritious feed for such as goats and sheep. There have also been studies showing the inclusion of Napier in poultry feed.

NAPIER GRASS VALUE ADDITION

Napier grass is a perennial grass which grows in a variety of soil types. It can be planted by stem cuttings and is relatively easy to propagate. It requires low inputs of nutrients and water and can be planted on uncultivated land making the start-up costs for a new entrant minimal particularly where land is available. Aside from occasional weeding and watering, maintenance after cultivation is minimal. Napier Grass can be cut, processed and stored as pellets or vacuum bagged as silage to prevent spoilage. It is estimated that cows need an average of 10-15Kg of feed per day (depending on body weight) to produce up to 2 extra litres of milk a day. The costs of converting Napier Grass into silage and pellets are outlined in the associated investment profile.

Napier Grass can be harvested several times after its first planting and only has to be renewed five years after if properly maintained. For either one of the products; Napier silage or Napier pellets, the key to success lies in maximizing the use of a fixed asset, land, to produce a product that can be reaped at multiple times before it would have to be renewed. The key investments would be in processing, packaging, marketing and distribution. With the potentials of Napier as alternative feed source for the basal diet of ruminants and the high cost of conventional feed, the formulation of Napier into products that are ready for purchase and consumption could become a lucrative business opportunity.

¹ Protein enrichment and digestion improvement of Napier grass and Pangolagrass with solid-state fermentation. Hsu PK1, Liu CP, Liu LY, Chang CH, Yang SS

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