

PEARLER HYBRID PENNISETUM



375mm+



4.3 – 8.5



Free Draining

KEY FEATURES

- Highly productive, producing high quality feed
- Similar protein and digestibility to oats, ryegrass and lab lab
- Greater feed quality over forage sorghum
- Contains no prussic acid
- Ultra-late maturity – option for late season feed to fill autumn feed gap
- Excellent quick feed option for summer
- Ideal for beef, sheep and dairy farming systems.

DESCRIPTION

Pearler is a high quality forage that can provide livestock productivity in summer similar to that from oats in winter. Pearler has a valuable role to play in Australia's grazing industry, especially in the more reliable rainfall areas of eastern Australia.



GRAZING MANAGEMENT

Pearler poses no risk of prussic acid poisoning; therefore, it can be grazed at a much earlier stage than forage sorghum. For best results graze early – as soon as the plants are not easily pulled out of the ground. The best results are achieved by keeping plant heights short, ideally 30–60cm to maintain quality and regrowth potential. There may not appear to be a lot of feed at this stage, but due to quick regrowth and high tillering ability, feed supply is good. Early grazing maximises protein and energy content, thus boosting animal productivity. When grazing is delayed beyond the ideal stage, Pearler still provides better feed quality than forage sorghum at a similar growth stage. This extended period of feed quality is a feature of the species, but it is also due to the ultra-late flowering nature of this variety. Pearler amply provides the feed quality required for fattening or lactating animals at the ideal grazing stage (when the crop is approximately 0.5m high) however it also maintains good feed quality even if grazing is temporarily delayed. Similarly, the energy requirements for both lactating and fattening livestock can be met even if the crop is not grazed until eight weeks after planting. If grazing is delayed longer than this, the feed may be marginal for top productivity but still more than covers the needs of other classes of livestock. In summary, as many graziers have already discovered, Pearler provides excellent milk production and liveweight gains.

HIGH STOCKING RATES AND ANIMAL SAFETY

Pearler's quick regrowth and lack of prussic acid means it can be grazed heavily for extended periods.

SOIL AND PADDOCK SELECTION

Being a hybrid forage pennisetum, a good well-drained soil is required and avoiding heavy soil types is particularly important. Generally, needs to be sown later in spring due to higher soil temperature requirements, ideally a consistent soil temperature of 18°C or more at 9am (3 consecutive days). Plantings at lower temperatures will dramatically slow early growth. Pearler has very small seeds (60,000 to 95,000 seeds/Kg), resulting in a requirement to plant into a well-prepared seed bed where good soil to seed contact can be achieved to ensure a successful establishment.

The general rule of thumb is "if it's not good farming country, it's not good for Pearler" is an excellent one to start with.

MOISTURE STRESS INDUCED UNPALATABILITY

Hybrid forage pennisetum is generally regarded as being very drought tolerant once the crop is established. Even under severe moisture stress, Pearler may not show outward signs of stress apart from a slowing in growth rate. Plants may remain relatively green and fresh looking even when soil moisture is depleted, and the crop is under severe stress. By comparison, a forage sorghum crop under similar stress may show many outward signs such as leaf curling, leaf death and a blue-green colour. Despite the lack of visible stress symptoms in hybrid forage pennisetum do suffer from severe moisture stress, subsequently some unseen changes may occur which can affect palatability.

If nitrate (N) levels are higher than phosphorus (P) (as determined by a Bicarb P test) unpalatability is more likely. Conversely, if P levels are higher than N levels then unpalatability is less likely.

What restores palatability?

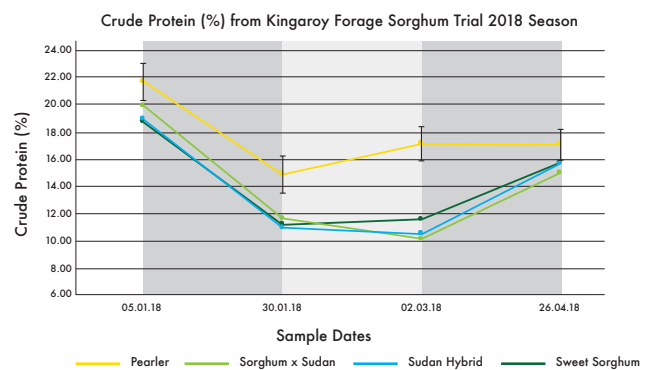
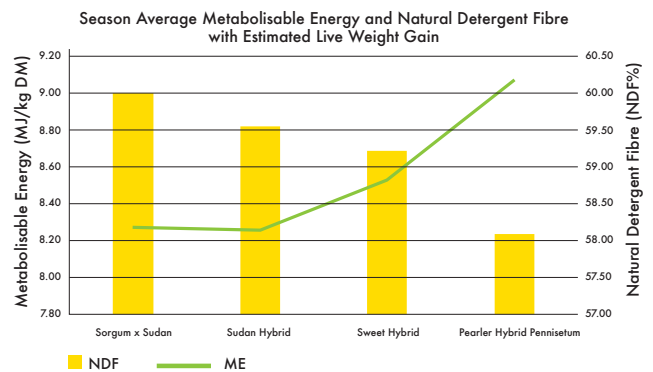
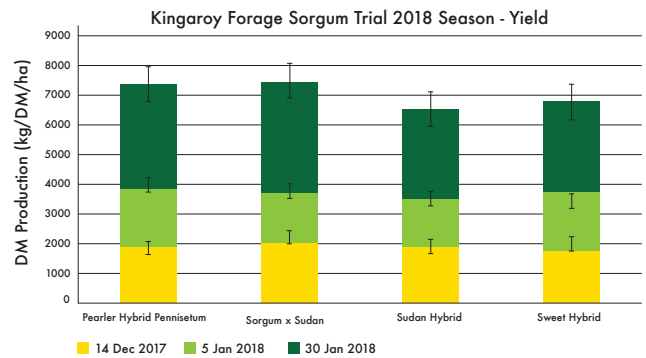
In the event of a crop becoming unpalatable, the only proven cure is a significant rainfall event or irrigation. The crop should become palatable within ten days provided it falls in the growing season and plants are able to resume growing. Unfortunately, no other attempted method of reversing the situation has provided consistent results.

RECOMMENDED SOWING RATE

Marginal Dryland: 2–5Kg/Ha

Reliable Dryland: 4–8Kg/Ha

High Rainfall & Irrigation: 8–15Kg/Ha



	Pearler Hybrid Pennisetum	Shirohie Millet
Approx. Seed Cost (\$/kg Inc. GST)	\$13.15	\$4.50
Approx. Seed Cost (\$/ha Inc. GST)	\$158	\$113
Fertiliser	\$220	\$108
Water @ \$60/ML	\$350	\$200
Establishment (Herbicide, Sowing)	\$200	\$200
Total Cost	\$928	\$621
Establishment Cost Difference		(-\$307)
Yield (kg DM/ha)	13,540	6,788
Yield Difference	(+6,752)	
Cost	6.9c/kg DM	9.1c/kg DM

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