



Teff Crop Management Manual

Benefits

- Palatable
- Fast growing
- High yield coupled with high quality
- Summer production
- Drought tolerant

Teff is a warm season annual summer grass which can be harvested multiple times during the growing season as hay, silage or pasture. As a fast-growing crop, Teff combines excellent forage quality with high yield during a relatively short growing season.

Emergency forage

Teff is an excellent choice as an emergency crop when weather delays the timely seeding of grain crops. Or as a rescue crop, when perennials have failed.



1. Sowing

Seeding period	From late spring to mid-summer (after the risk of frost has passed).
Seed bed	Firm seed bed is absolutely critical.
Soil temperature	At least 16° C.
Seeding depth	Should not exceed 0.5 cm.
Seeding rate	10-12 kg/ha.
Seed to soil contact	Good seed to soil contact is required.
Sowing technique	Use broadcast sowing to minimize weed establishment. If row planters are used, row-spacing should be very narrow (< 10 cm).
Moisture	Due to its small seed size, Teff cannot be planted deep into moisture.
Irrigation	Sprinkler irrigation is beneficial in broadcast plantings to aid emergence, if the seed is not rolled or packed after planting.



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2. Fertilization

In general	Teff is a low input crop, requiring minimal fertilization.
Fertilization	Both manure and artificial fertilizer can be applied.
Nitrogen (N) First cutting	Plantings may not need any additional nitrogen fertilization on the first cutting.
Nitrogen (N) Single applications	Excessive single applications of nitrogen above 110 kg/ha may result in lodging.
Nitrogen (N) Multiple cut	Multiple cut systems may require split applications of nitrogen (30 to 55 kg) following each cut throughout the growing season for maximum production.
Nitrogen (N) Total seasonal	Generally in the range of 55 to 100 kg of plant available nitrogen.
Phosphorus (P) and Sulphur (S)	Moderate amounts of phosphorous and in some cases sulphur may be required.



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3. Weeds and pests control

Pre-plant cultivation	Can be effective, especially if Teff is planted immediately after cultivation.
Broadleaf herbicide	Growers should check with their local suppliers and follow all label instructions. If a broadleaf herbicide is applied, Teff should not be treated until the plant has at least 5 to 7 leaves.
Natural resistance	Following the initial root growth period, Teff grows very aggressive and can out-compete many weeds.



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4. Harvesting

Cutting height	10 cm
Moment of harvest	Harvest should occur in early boot stage and prior to seed head appearance to ensure optimal forage quality and regrowth in subsequent cuts.
Cutting	Due to the fineness of its stems, Teff is one of the few annual forage crops that is suitable for making dry bales rather than having to ensile it.
Cutting interval	Generally 45 to 50 days for first cut and approximately 30 days for subsequent cuts; however this may vary by location. Cuts shouldn't be too heavy.
Grazing	Although best suited for haying operations, Teff can be grazed by cattle, horses and sheep. Avoid pasturing until the root system has developed, excess stocking rates and over-grazing.

