

Summer Fodder- An Alternative Approach To The Fodder Concerns

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**Good Food results in Good Health,
Good health leads to Good Production
&**

Good production ultimately gives great monetary returns.

Any feed made from green crops like legumes, cereals or tree-based crops is termed as green fodder & fodder that's cultivated between April-June is basically called summer fodder. Green fodder is an economical source of feed that is highly nutritious, palatable, rich in minerals & vitamins and provides essential macro and micronutrients to animals. Fodder rich diet is helpful in reducing the risk of heart disease, cancer and controlling fat levels as it contains omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids in 1:1 to 1:4.

Agriculture and animal husbandry in India are interwoven, with mixed farming and livestock rearing being an integral part of rural livelihoods in our country. Although the agriculture sector's contribution to the Indian economy is steadily declining, both the agriculture and livestock sectors employ 52 per cent of the workforce (Livestock



Census 2019). India has the most significant livestock population in the world. It accounts for about 57 per cent of the world's buffalo and 14 per cent of the cattle population. The livestock sector contributed 4.19 per cent of the total GVA in 2018-19. The livestock population is around 535.78 million and is anticipated to grow at the rate of 0.55 per cent in the upcoming years, but the average production of milk and meat of our animals is 20-60 % lesser than the

global average and one of the main reason behind this low productivity is lack of quantity and quality of fodder, So for profitable livestock production, it is necessary to make available surplus nutritious fodder for them as fodder is the cheapest source of feed for livestock.

Forage and feeds are significant inputs in animal husbandry, contributing nearly 70% of the total cost of production. Cultivated fodder includes rangeland and pastures, dual-purpose crops, the residue of field crops, fodder trees and shrubs.

Important summer fodder crops

Crop	Varieties	Yield (t/ha/yr.)	Protein (%)	Total Digestible Nutrient (TDN %)
Maize	African tall, Pratap Makka Chari 6	35-80	8-10	60
Sorghum	Single cut- Pusa Chari hybrid-106, Pant Chari-4, Pusa Chari 6, MP Chari. Multi cut- Pant Chari-5, SSG-988	35-40	4-5	58
Pearl millet	Single cut- Giant Bajra Multi cut- FBC-16	30-40	11.6	45
Bajra Napier Hybrid	IGFRI- 5,7,10	70-100	9-12	55-58
Guinea grass	Bundel guinea 2	60-90	8-12	
Anjan grass	Bundel anjan-1,3	15-17	11	
Cowpea	Bundel lobia 1,UPC-625	30-35	3	56-58
Cluster bean	BG-1,2, RGC-936, HG 2-20	15-20	10-15	

Fodder sources on field bunds & degraded land

Especially in the western parts of India, where there are water and other constraints in the production of legume and cereal fodder, trees like babul, neem etc. ,have become the saviour. In parts of Rajasthan, due to a shortage



of fodder in the lean period, babul leaves are fed to the goats as well, as now, spineless cactus is also getting popular to meet the fodder needs.

Complete Feed Block (Developed by NIANP, Bangalore)

The complete feed block technology comprises of forage, concentrate and other essential supplements in appropriate quantities to fulfil the nutrient requirements of your animals. CBF is an intimate combination of processed ingredients that includes roughage and concentrates parts designed to be the only feed source in



compressed form. The major components of complete feed block technology are forage and concentrate, which are added in different ratios depending on the production level. The minor components include - micronutrients and feed additives. Forage comprises crop leftovers such as wheat, paddy straw, maize stover and sugarcane tops. In hilly regions, forest grasses and tree leaves are also used. A complete feed block reduces the space required for fodder storage. It makes transportation easy and less bulky.

Complete feed block technology is a boon for dairy farmers worldwide. Apart from being a completely balanced food for animals, it relieves the farmers at the time of fodder dearth. By adopting this technology, farmers can save a lot of money on animal treatment and medicines.

Urea Molasses Mineral Block (UMMB) – A Feed Supplement

Ruminants have a special compartment in their stomach called the rumen. It contains many beneficial microorganisms, which help in the digestion of fibrous components of the feed. During scarcity of green fodder, UMMB helps the rumen microbes to multiply and thus improves the digestibility of dry fodder.



Benefits of UMMB:

- Increases dry fodder intake and minimizes wastage.
- Improves the digestive efficiency of the animals.
- Improves milk production and fat percentage.
- It is a good source of essential minerals.

Characteristics of good fodder crop

- High regeneration capacity reduces the need for frequent planting and tillage compared to perennial fodder crops.
- Wider adaptability-can grow under stress conditions
- Quick growing habit with close spacing followed by optimum spacing. Dense plant stands smothers weeds and prevents soil erosion.
- Improves soil health by adding organic residues and adjustable crop duration that minimizes risk due to aberrant weather.
- Multi-cut nature can provide fodder at regular intervals.
- The cost of cultivation decreases with subsequent cuttings in the case of multi-cut and perennial fodder as well as in fodder-cum-seed crops.

**Conclusion:**

In view of increasing the farmer's income, livestock rearing is one of the crucial aspects whose growth and development are conditioned by the adequate availability of feed and fodder. The availability of feed and fodder remains the primary area of concern as, with an increasing livestock population, our country's deficit in requirement and availability of fodder is increasing. But with the efforts of ICAR and ICAR-IGFRI, several new varieties of fodder crops are developed, providing a high quantity of fodder and high quality of fodder.

More scientific ways are developed to store fodder so the supply can be maintained during the lean period. But with the recent progress in technology, it all lies in farmers and the agriculture youth to employ those techniques & processes in their fields to reap the maximum profit. So, money should be invested in Fodder to meet the nutrition requirements to attain an upper hand in production and income.

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