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Assessment of Composition and Productivity of Natural Grassland at Zamfara Reserve, Sokoto

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ABSTRACT

Amongst the native grassland species encountered in Zamfara Reserve, Crowfoot grass *Dectyloctenium aegyptium* (L) Willd. (Gudegude - Hausa) and (*Urachloa mosambicensis*) (Hack.) Dandv (Sabi grass) deserve special attention. Like *Pennisetum pedicellatum* (Kyasuwa grass), they are well adapted to the Sudan Savannah. They establish very well with seed and their drymatter Yields have been found to be reasonable (5.86 and 2.86 t/ha), respectively. They are quite acceptable to the local livestock for which they provide grazing early in the season. With improvement, their duration could be extended. Experience has shown that *Andropogon gayanus* (northern Gamba grass), though adapted, is poorly propagated from seed. Its establishment on a wide scale by cuttings is not feasible. Alyce clover (*Alysicarpus vaginalis*) is a native species very acceptable to livestock, but it very poorly established from seed even when treated with hot water. However, reports from NAPRI, Zaria (Personal communication) revealed that following treatment with hot water improved its germination to about 75%. Rhodes grass (*Chloris gayana*) is well established from seed and sprouts from the stools are appreciable. It is quick growing and so can fit into the short growing season here. Its drymatter has been quite high (6.64 t/ha). As an introduced legume. Verano (*Stylosanthes hamata*) has also been found to have very variable (1.51 -6.56 t/ha), depending on the amount and duration of rainfall. Unlike Alyce clover, it is fairly well established from seed matures and set seed within the available growing season. It was found to be the most acceptable of the species under trial in Zamfara Reserve. The seed is however hard and has to be broken by heat.

Keyword