

Purple Guinea grass

Scientific name: *Panicum maximum* cv. Purple (Tanzania, TD58)

Productivity: Purple Guinea is a tall grass, 1.5-2.5m high, which is very suitable for cut-and-carry. In South America it is grazed, but in Thailand it is mainly used for cut-and-carry forage. It is the main grass for fresh grass sales in Thailand. It is a very productive leafy grass, producing between 12 and 30 t/ha dry matter per year.

Crude protein levels: 8-12% crude protein in Thailand on poor soils and 12-16 % crude protein on better soils.

Animal production: In South America, liveweight gains of 720 g/hd/day during the wet and 240 g in the dry season.

Grazing management: Can be either rotationally grazed or set stocked. Management depends on the farmer's experience. All farmers in Thailand prefer cut-and-carry. Therefore cut every 40-45 days in the wet season and 60-70 days in the cool season.

Establishment: Can be either planted in rows, 50 cm apart, or broadcast sown at 6-8 kg/ha. Sow the seed on to the soil surface, brush the seed with soil by using tree branches or large brooms. Bury the seed no more than 1-2 cm under the soil. It is easy to plant from rooted tillers. It needs well drained, good fertility soils to grow well.

Background: It was introduced into Thailand from the Ivory Coast in the late 1980s. It was immediately accepted by Thailand farmers, because it was far more productive than common guinea grass and it produced very high yields of good quality forage. It was also easy to produce seed and so seed was readily available.

