

The potential of sweet potato as animal feed in East Africa: An overview

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East and Central Africa

- Extensive
 - Drought-prone areas
 - Erratic rainfall
 - Limited movement
- Intensive
 - Dairying
 - Poor-quality pastures
 - Cut and carry



Principal feed constraints

- Quality (calving and weaning)
- Quantity (end of dry season)
- High concentrate prices
- Low milk and meat prices

Advantages of sweet potato

- ▣ Drought tolerant, quick-growing, low input
- ▣ Inter-crop, relay crop
- ▣ High energy (roots), protein (vines), soluble sugars
- ▣ Conserve as 'hay', dried roots, silage
- ▣ Food security (Use as human food)



Traditionally used

Seasonality of production



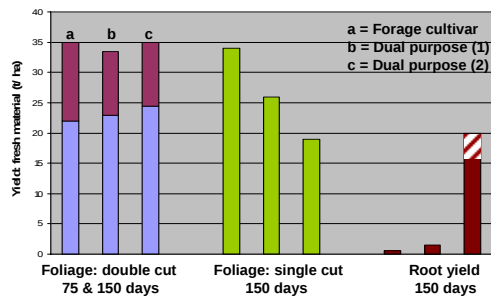
Survey: Western Kenya

- ▣ Dried roots – $\frac{1}{3}$ reduction in income
- ▣ Vine sales – currently 30% increase over Napier grass (Plus roots)
- ▣ Market possibilities for silage (As partial replacement for dairy feed)

Practical integration of sweet potato

- ▣ Cultivar (Traditional, foliage, dual purpose)
- ▣ Agronomy (spacings)
- ▣ Harvest regime (double harvest)

Cutting regimes: yield of fresh material



Silage making techniques



Conclusions

- ▣ Sweet potato capable of high forage yields
- ▣ Dual purpose cultivars give high root yields
- ▣ Double-cut has little effect on root yields
- ▣ Simple silage methods developed
- ▣ Silage has potential as a tradable commodity
- ▣ Dried roots not a commercial proposition

