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“Filling gaps and removing traps
for sustainable resource management”

Scaling of Feeds and Forages Technologies in East Africa

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Abstract

Feed for livestock is identified as the limiting factor for livestock productivity and accounts for up to 70 % of the production costs in the Kenyan dairy farms. Year around access to high quality feed determines the productivity and competitiveness of the dairy sector. The actual situation is still characterised by scarcity in quantity and quality with scarcity peaks in the dry season.

CIAT's Tropical Forages meanwhile works for decades on the improvement of forages by breeding and selection of *Brachiaria* and *Panicum*. Our private sector partner Papalotla Sementes released 3 hybrids on the Kenyan market and they are commercially available. One more hybrid, 4 cultivars of *Brachiaria* and 1 *Panicum* cultivar will be on the market by mid 2019.

CIAT is convinced that these improved forages can mitigate feed scarcity in quantity and quality and contribute to better feeding practices, increase the productivity of the dairy cows and consequently contribute to higher income generation of dairy farmers. This applies for the high productive rainy season but also shortens the period of low to none production of the classical forages due to the better drought resistance of the introduced *Brachiaria* and *Panicum*.

The scaling approaches (along the value chain, farmer to farmer, partnerships with development organisations) and activities (demonstration plots, farmer field days, trainings, partnerships with public and private sector etc) to reach out to a large number of farmers (>100000 farmers over 5 years) are presented as well as actual achievements (>11000 farmers in 2018) and further planned activities.

The experiences made in Kenya will be the base for further scaling efforts in East African countries which also have a growing dairy sector and face the same challenges for sufficient high value feed.

Keywords: East Africa, forages, livestock, scaling