

From forage surplus to dry season feeding: evaluating strategies for ruminants in central Cameroon

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Context and objective

- ▶ Poor forage availability and quality during the dry season
 - ▶ Negative impact on ruminant productivity
 - ▶ Fodder conservation explored as a potential solution
- Optimise ruminant feeding strategies using locally available resources



Materials and methods

- ▶ Multi-nutrient blocs (MNBs)
- ▶ Palatability trial with calves
- ▶ Silage production



Pic: Bilone farm, Obala

Results



Multi-nutrient blocs (MNBs)

- ▶ Addition of either *Stylosanthes guianensis* or *Tithonia diversifolia*
- ▶ Satisfactory physical characteristics (cohesion, hardness, smell)
- ▶ Cost for a 10kg MNB : CHF 2,20 (EUR 2,35)

Palatability trials

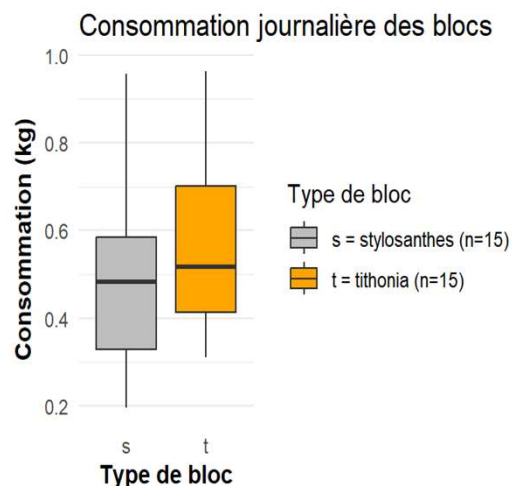


Fig. : Daily consumption of MNBs per calf

- ▶ MNB « stylo » vs « tithonia »
- ▶ No significative difference
- ▶ Average daily consumption of 523g
- ▶ Consumption increased over time (+18g/day)

Silage

- ▶ Grass, banana and *Tithonia diversifolia* leaves
- ▶ Accepted by ruminants but damaged by termites and mice
- ▶ Large quantities required for all ruminants (16m³ per month)



Conclusion

- ▶ Ensuring sufficient production of conserved fodder during periods of forage surplus is critical to enable locally sourced feeding during the dry season
- ▶ Both strategies are suitable and promising, however they require further research
- ▶ Silage requires specific equipment and technical knowledge whereas MNBs are more time consuming