BLUE LEAF

SEEDS FOR YOUR SUCCESS

RHODES GRASS (Chloris Gayana) – A BETTER PASTURE FOR THE TROPICS

Permanent pasture

Erosion control

Good hay

Provides good foggage

S.p.e.c.i.a.l.i.s.t.s. o.n. T.r.o.p.i.c.a.l. S.e.e.d.s. s.i.n.c.e. 1999

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RHODES GRASS

Rhodes Grass is a perennial summer grass that can be used as permanent pasture or a short- to medium-term pasture. It is also useful for erosion control by virtue of its spreading growth. It makes good hay if cut at or just before early flowering, and provides good stand over feed.

Various advantages of Rhodes grass are as follows:

- Palatable to highly palatable forage grass with high leaf production
- Good feed value
- Used to maintain erosion-control
- Strong germinator with robust seedlings
- Produces abundance of seed which is easy to reap
- No danger of bloat
- Outstanding disease tolerance
- Suitable for hay and good foggage potential
- Excellent waterlogging tolerance

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RHODES GRASS

The importance of coating Rhodes Grass

Most sub-tropical grasses have very small seeds; seed count may vary from 500,000 – 3,000,000 and more seeds per kg. This suggests that the nutrient reserves for ensuring seedling survival are very limited. The endosperm in this case in the source of these nutrients. It is also a known fact that germination percentages of subtropical grasses are highly variable ranging from 5% - 30% on average. Rhodes grass is no exception. Germination percentages are also affected by the conditions under which seed ripens on the plant before harvest or before seed is shed naturally. The latter is of particular importance because the subtropical environments in which these grasses proliferate are subjected to fluctuating climatic conditions which in some instances can be extreme.

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The importance of coating Rhodes Grass

Predation by insects once seed has been shed can also be a major contributor to poor proliferation of species. Research in Australia suggests that up to 70% of seed actually sown in commercial situations can be removed by predatory insects. Birds can also be a major contributor to removal of seed from lands before germination commences.

Under commercial conditions “plain” Rhodes grass seed, because of its very nature does not plant easily. Seeds tend to stick or adhere to each other. The seed therefore does not flow easily through the planter mechanism.

Taking the above factors into account, the coating of seed can in some cases eliminate the problems referred to above and in other instances significantly reduce some of the risks associated with planting “plain” seed versus the planting of coated “BLUELEAF” Rhodes seed.

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RHODES GRASS

The Benefits of coating Rhodes Seed

- Better seed to soil contact.
- Improved handling and flow – ballistic properties
- Accurate distribution of seed.
- Increased seedling survival - increased vigour
- Economical to use.
- Added seedling nutrition, especially the localised application of phosphorous close to the seed.
- Other nutrients can also be added if specific needs are required.
- Insecticides, fungicide and growth stimulants can be included.
- In the case of legumes “rhizobia” can be placed within the coating around the seed to enhance the inoculation process.
- Strong seedlings provide for sustained increased productivity throughout the life of the pasture.
- Seedlings compete better with weeds.

Current research in the RSA suggests that “Coated” Rhodes grass seeds perform better in drier conditions when planted in good agricultural soil than seed that is <u>not</u> coated.

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RHODES GRASS

Rehabilitation

Rehab environments are often hostile to emerging seedlings because of the presence of various chemical conditions.
In this case initial research has shown that “coated” Rhodes grass seed is not negatively affected by the potential chemical reaction between the coating and the chemical condition of the growth medium-seed environment.

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RHODES GRASS SNAP SHOT

DESCRIPTION:

- Perennial stoloniferous summer grass
- Grows up to 1,5 m tall

USES:

- Combines well with Smutsfinger grass

CLIMATE:

- Subtropical

MOISTURE:

- 600mm per annum

SOIL PREFERENCE:

- Highly adaptable

SOWING RATE:

- Rows : BLUELEAF : 10 - 15 kg / ha
- Broadcast : BLUELEAF: 15 kg / ha

PLANTING METHOD:

- When : Establish in summer
- How : Broadcast onto a well prepared and rolled seedbed.