COMPOSITION AND IN VITRO DIGESTIBILITY OF SOME FODDERS, GRASSES AND LEGUMES IN SRI LANKA

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The influence of three levels of nitrogen, namely O, 50 and 100 kg N/ha/yr, on changes in feeding value and chemical composition of some important fodders, grasses and legumes, hat can be grown in the mid-country, when harvested at 15, 30 and 45 days, was investigated.

The DM% of all species increased with advancing age from 15 to 45 days. In general, fodders had lower, dry matter at 15 and 30 days after defoliation than grasses and legumes.

The average crude protein content of legumes were higher than that of grasses and fodders at 15 and 30 days, but the IVOMD was higher for fodders and grasses compared to legumes.

The estimated ME values suggest that fodders harvested at these two stages of growth are better in quality than grasses and legumes harvested at the same age.

Applied nitrogen had little effect on dry matter, crude protein and IVOMD percentage, possibly because of the low levels investigated.

It is concluded that fodders appear to be better forages than grasses for the mid-country of Sri Lanka, when grown as pure stands. Inclusion of legumes may however bring about an improvement in feeding value of grasses.