

IN VITRO DIGESTIBILITY OF SOME SRI LANKAN
FORAGE SPECIES BASED ON RUMEN INOCULA
FROM GOATS, CATTLE AND BUFFALOES

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A total of twenty-four browse and fodder leaves available for ruminant feeding in the Eastern and Central provinces were analysed for proximate composition and *in vitro* organic matter digestibility (IVOMD). IVOMD values were determined according to a modified method of Tilley and Terry¹ using rumen liquor collected from fistulated goats, cattle and buffaloes (two animals per species). Necessary precautions were taken to standardize the IVOMD values and to improve the reliability of the relative digestibility estimates.

The crude protein contents of most of the plant leaves studied were superior to those of grasses commonly available at the farm level. Of the 24 plant leaves analyzed, 13 had IVOMD values higher than 50%. The most promising species include *Ipomea piolaria*, *Ipomea per-caprae*, *Phaseolus aconiti*, *Mikania scandens*, *Gliricidia maculata*, *Manihot esculenta* and *Leucaena leucocephala*. A comparison of relative efficiencies of digestion of the three ruminant species indicate that, in general, goats were superior than cattle and buffaloes. No marked differences were observed in the IVOMD values between cattle and buffaloes.

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Reference

1. Tilley, J.M.A and Terry, R.A. (1963). J. Brit.Grassl.Soc. 18, 104.

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