

B-136: Herbage production from native grasses and planted pastures under coconut in southern Sri Lanka

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Present paper reports the dry matter yields of native herbage and planted grass species under an old unfertilized coconut plantation at Kekanadura near Matara. The results are based on a single harvest taken in 1995, after abundant southwest monsoon rains of 750 mm from early May to late September.

Native herbage communities yielded nearly 1,850 kg/ha of air-dried pasture material after 5 months of growth. Contrasted with these yields, planted green panic (*Panicum maximum* var. *trichoglume*), elephant grass (*Pennisetum purpureum*), and Para grass *Brachiaria brizantha* pastures under the same conditions gave 12, 16, and 11 metric tons/ha.

It was concluded that the establishment of the pastures with exotic grass species such as *Panicum maximum* var. *trichoglume*, *Pennisetum purpureum*, and *Brachiaria brizantha* under coconut plantations in wet lowland areas significantly increases the herbage dry matter yields.