

Forage Legumes

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Blurb

Forage crops are important for the economy of our country as these crops provide major nutritional base in the livestock ration. The National Commission on Agriculture has also emphasized in its report that in order to achieve the so-called White Revolution it will be necessary to provide required emphasis on research relating to the improvement and management of forages. India's average availability of milk per head per day comes to only 100 ml as against our requirement of 220 ml per day. With the increase in world human population and economic growth, the demand for animal products such as milk, meat and eggs in the human diet is bound to increase. The success of dairy and poultry programmes will largely depend on the availability of required forages and feeds since almost 60-65% investment is invariably on these essential requirements. A recent estimate indicates that the deficiency in total forage need is about 40% of dry forage and about 24% of green fodder. This deficit is likely to increase further as (i) the area under forage crop is declining because of the pressing problems of growing cereals and other cash crops to meet the increasing pressure of population growth, (ii) the animal population is increasing every year by almost 2% (iii) cultivable land is decreasing due to urbanization and industrial growth and (iv) forages in future are going to have competition from liquid fuel shortage. Recent interests in the development of technology for the economic conversion of cellulosic material to liquid fuels, however, have given rise to estimates of several hundred million metric tons of lignocellulosic material being used annually for their new developments. With the development of these technologies, the impact on ruminants production would be substantial, so there is going to be a vital challenge to meet the requirement of forages in the near future.

Foreword

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