

Productivity from forage sorghum on Springsure property



The past two seasons have highlighted the productivity of a well-managed and adapted forage sorghum crop on the property of Jeff Howard of 'Satellite', Springsure. Jeff has used Pioneer® hybrid forage sorghum, Mega Sweet, as cattle feed well into the winter and spring periods.

"We have never had so much productivity out of the one sorghum," he said. Last season Mega Sweet was planted to three paddocks totalling 1800 acres (730 hectares).

"It was planted into cultivated country (in November) and left to get a good head of grain on it," Jeff said. "We then put a big mob of cattle in for the next 70 to 100 days."

Jeff said the cattle were shuffled around the three paddocks with two of the paddocks providing three grazings during the season. The paddocks were still carrying stock through until September. Cattle were generally stocked at a rate of one beast per two acres with the stocking rate lightened as the year progressed and the strips were grazed out although they were still producing well.

"Even the third time there was still grain in the head," Jeff said. "Mega Sweet also showed no signs of (the disease) ergot, which we were very happy about."

The crop was planted at a rate of 3 kg/ha into 1.2 metre rows.

"This season we will put all our country to Mega Sweet, rather than planting it to (grain) sorghum," Jeff said.

"The gross margin out of Mega Sweet is so much more."

Cattle are grown for the Jap Ox market and performed particularly well on Mega Sweet in 2005.



In March of that year 600 steers were bought in at an average liveweight of 290 kilograms. After eight months the leads had produced a dressed weight of 320 kilograms with an estimated average daily liveweight weight gain of 0.7 kilograms per head. "It is excellent carryover feed," he said. "It's like a feedlot in the paddock."