1969

# Sudan grass.

Western Australia. Department of Agriculture

Sudan grass.
[South Perth, W.A. : Dept of Agriculture,
n.d.]

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# SUDAN GRASS.

INTRODUCTION: Sudan grass which is a native of Africa is one of the most drought resisting of our summer fodder crops. It matures fairly rapidly and under suitable conditions may be ready for cutting two months after seeding. It is a crop particularly suitable for sowing on areas of land which retain the moisture well into and quite often through the summer months. In the cereal growing areas its best use is possibly as a grazed crop providing as it does valuable green grazing during the summer months; if desired it can also produce hay of good quality and nutrient value.

SOIL CULTIVATION: Sudan grass has given favourable results on many types of soils, and does not appear to be exacting in this regard. Best results, however, are obtained from rich well-drained loams overlying a clay subsoil. Deep light sandy soils are disappointing, as a rule, unless enriched with a fertiliser containing nitrogen, preferably farmyard manure.

Land intended for Sudan grass should be fallowed as e early as possible in the winter to conserve moisture and kill weeds. The aim should be to produce a firm seed bed covered with 1 to 1½ inches of loose surface soil. This may be produced by cultivation to kill weeds, but after ploughing and prior to seeding.

Rolling the land after cultivation and prior to seeding has given good results, but care should be taken to harrow or cultivate lightly after rolling to loosen the immediate surface.

The importance of a good bed cannot be stressed too much, as the plant must rely almost entirely on the conserved moisture for its germination and growth.

TIME OF PLANTING: Sudan grass will not germinate in cold badly aerated soils and planting should therefore not take place until all danger from frost is over and ground temperatures have risen. In cereal growing areas, late September - early October would be a suitable planting period.

METHOD OF SEEDING: Only seed free from Sorghum hybrids should be used and in addition unless care is taken to purchase only seed with a high germination percentage disappointing results may ensue in districts where only a light sowing rate is used.

Sudan grass may be sown either broadcast or through a drill but the former is not recommended, except in districts of high rainfall and in addition, the rate per acre should be increased by 50 per cent.

For small areas the small Cahoon broadcasting machine can be used and with larger areas, the grass seeding attachment to the ordinary drill. Seeding is however best done with the drill, mixing the seed with the fertiliser used and sowing within 24 hours of mixing. When planted with the drill, the ordinary depth practiced with wheat usually gives good results, one of the main points to be considered is the placing of the seed on a damp seed bed to facilitate rapid germination as, the sooner the plant can germinate and start growing, the greater use can it make of the available moisture. The recommended rate of seeding is 3 - 4 lbs per acre.

FERTILISER REQUIREMENTS: On good loaming country the only fertiliser usually required is super-phsophate, reasonably liberal dressings of at least 100 lbs. per acre being desirable. On the sandier soils a nitrogenous fertiliser such as potato manure would be beneficial. Where the land had been down to clover for a period, it is doubtful if the addition of any nitrogenous fertiliser would be necessary.