

## Policy Recommendations for Advancement of the Regulatory Framework for Forage Seed Nairobi, Kenya, 1 October 2024

The ruminant livestock sector in Kenya contributes up to 42% of the agricultural GDP and 12% of the national GDP (ILRI, 2021). It plays a significant role in the livelihoods, food and nutrition security, and incomes of households. Livestock performance in the dairy and red meat value chains is constrained by lack of year-round supply of good quality and adequate quantity of forages and forage seed. This causes low productivity, reduced growth of the sector and high emission of greenhouse gases per unit of livestock output (Leitner et al , 2021).

This brief reflects on the required actions at policy level for increasing availability of certified improved forage seed in Kenya, with a view on the regulatory framework for forage seed listing and release. The brief is anchored in a Working Paper with a large number of recommendations for operational improvements. Enhanced availability of novel forage seed varieties can be achieved faster if the following policies are considered and implemented:

<p>1. Provide for making livestock “feed-secure” to achieve food security and sector growth.</p> <p>(a) Consider forages as food security crops and allocate more long-term funding to forage research &amp; development.</p> <p>(b) Develop a Forage sub-Sector Improvement Strategy for Kenya and develop and pass a Forage Bill.</p> <p>(c) Initiate a market study to assess the demand for forage seed and the potential for local/regional seed improvement programmes.</p>
<p>2. Prioritize development of effective strategies to enhance registration, maintenance, marketing, distribution, awareness and adoption of novel forages.</p>
<p>3. Review/update the forage crop list with suitable new forages for Kenya at genus and species level and include a provision for regular updates in Seeds and Plant Varieties Act CAP 326 and Crops Act CAP 318.</p>
<p>4. Facilitate inclusion of forages in the COMESA Variety Catalogue. Support the development of instruments to maximize effective use of ongoing harmonization within regional trade blocks, i.e. EAC, COMESA, SADC for sharing of information on Pest Risk Analysis (PRA), National Performance Trial (NPT) and Distinctiveness Uniformity and Stability (DUS) data; this will help fast-track listing of novel forages.</p>
<p>5. Enable KEPHIS to implement the recommendations in the Working Paper and increase its capacity to:</p> <p>(a) Access PRA data from countries with suitable forages for the tropics but with no history of prior importation.</p> <p>(b) Assess performance of forage crops and to review standards for testing of range grasses.</p> <p>(c) Enforce regulations more actively against fake forage seed and commercial sales of uncertified seed.</p>
<p>6. Government to initiate and facilitate partnerships with donors, researchers, development partners and private sector, to allocate land and unlock funding for enhancing the forage sub-sector and for strengthening KEPHIS’ capacity to exercise its mandate in the forage sub-sector more effectively.</p>
<p>7. National and County governments to consider reducing/waving VAT, cess and other levies on forage seeds and on sales of conserved forages such as hay and silage.</p>

### Abbreviations

ABC/CIAT	- Alliance for Bioversity/International Centre for Tropical Agriculture
COMESA	- Common Market for Eastern & Southern Africa
EAC	- East African Community
ILRI	- International Livestock Research Institute
KALRO	- Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation
KEPHIS	- Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service
KIT	- Royal Tropical Institute
SADC	- Southern Africa Development Community
SNV	- SNV Netherlands Development Organisation
STAK	- Seed Trade Association of Kenya

