

Economic impact of the use of alfalfa in dairy cows

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The employment of alfalfa in dairy production systems using intensive grazing in summer with tropical grasses and supplementation with corn silage in winter increases the profitability of these systems. An experiment was conducted employing cows with milk production of 25 kg of milk / day in an area of 35 hectares distributed in 12.3 hectares of grass Tobiatã and 22.87 hectares for the production of corn for silage. With the introduction of alfalfa in the system 35 hectares were distributed in 10.11 hectares of pasture Tobiatã, 17.52 hectares of corn silage and alfalfa 7.37 hectares for grazing in the winter and summer. Alfalfa was irrigated in the winter and the amount invested in irrigation equipment was R \$ 54,012.85 and alfalfa formation invested to R\$ 20,092.42. The total daily dry matter consumed by lactating cow was 18.05 kg in the traditional system and 18,29 kg in the system with alfalfa (isoenergetic and isoproteic diet). The indicated feed management is to provide, in the dry season, corn silage and concentrate twice a day, 40 % in the morning and 60 % in the afternoon, always after grazing on alfalfa, aiming to stimulate the consumption of forage. At the time of the concentrated water will also be provided twice a day, 40 % in the morning and 60 % in the afternoon, well after grazing on alfalfa to stimulate the consumption of forage. In the afternoon, after the second grazing in alfalfa, the animals will be free to graze the grass Tanzania which occurs mainly in the evening. For animal production over 6.000 liters of milk per lactation, it is recommended alfalfa participating with 30 % to 40 % of dry matter consumed. The cost of operating production per lactating cow / year in the traditional system was R\$ 5,359.55 and the system with alfalfa R\$ 4,843.34. Net income / hectare / year in the traditional system was R\$ 3,393.24 and the system with alfalfa R\$ 3,728.85 (including investment in irrigation and training of alfalfa. Therefore, the introduction of alfalfa in dairy production systems using high-producing dairy cows is very competitive. The benefits of the use of alfalfa in dairy production systems result from the increased production of dry matter per hectare year and the high protein content of the forage, which increase the number of cows in the herd and reduce production costs concentrated.

Keywords: grazing alfalfa, milk production, cow milk, net income, cost, intensive grazing milk production.