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**HOST SUITABILITY OF TALL FESCUE (*Festuca arundinacea*) CULTIVARS TO *Meloidogyne ethiopica* and *M. graminicola*. HOSPEDABILIDADE DE CULTIVARES DE FESTUCA (*Festuca arundinacea*) A *Meloidogyne ethiopica* e *M. graminicola*. Cruz FF<sup>1</sup>; Brum D<sup>2</sup>; Gomes CB<sup>3</sup>; Nyczepir AP<sup>4</sup> - <sup>1</sup>Embrapa Clima Temperado /UFPEL - Fitopatologia; <sup>2</sup>Embrapa Clima Temperado/UFPEL - Fitopatologia; <sup>3</sup>Embrapa Clima Temperado - Fitopatologia; <sup>4</sup>USDA-ARS - S.E. Fruit & Tree Nut Res. Lab**

Considering the importance of the perennial grass tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*) having as forage potential and its resistance to many pests, including some phytoparasitic nematodes, the host reaction of three tall fescue cultivars (cvs. Bulldogs 51, Georgia 5 and Jesup AR542 ) was evaluated for their susceptibility to *Meloidogyne spp.* under greenhouse conditions. Seedlings of the different cultivars were planted into pots containing sterilized soil and inoculated with 5000 eggs + second stage juveniles of *Meloidogyne ethiopica* or *M. graminicola*/plant. 'Rutgers' tomato and 'BR IRGA 410' rice (known susceptibility host) were used as the control for *M. ethiopica* and *M. graminicola*, respectively. The treatments were replicated six times in a completely randomized design. Seventy days after inoculation, the nematode final population was estimated to determine the reproduction factor (RF=final population/initial population) for both *Meloidogyne spp.* for the different genetic materials. 'Georgia 5' and 'Jesup AR542' RF were rated as resistant hosts to *M. graminicola* and *M. ethiopica*; while 'Bulldog 51' behaved as resistant to *M. graminicola* and immune to *M. ethiopica* as compared to the controls. Tall fescue may have potential as preplant control strategy in suppressing these *Meloidogyne* species in infested agricultural areas. Apoio Financeiro: Embrapa Clima Temperado