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## PIPER SUDANGRASS

This variety of Sudangrass is widely used for pasture, greenchop, hay, and cover crop (green manure). Piper is noted for its lower prussic acid content. This doesn't rule out the possibility of a prussic acid problem with a grazed field, but under similar growing conditions, Piper Sudangrass will tend to have fewer problems with prussic acid than other Sudan varieties, Sudan hybrids, or Sorghum X Sudan hybrids. Piper is noted for strong seedling vigor and rapid growth with early maturity. It recovers rapidly after cutting or grazing and this characteristic helps to increase yield. Piper has yielded similar to the hybrid Sudan varieties in numerous trials throughout California and Arizona and has often led the trials, with the highest yields of high protein feed. Piper Sudan may grow up to 80 inches tall, but under normal hay production methods the field is usually clipped at 3-4 feet for higher quality hay. Piper is noted for its prolific tillering which improves regrowth and increases yield. Depending on the area grown, temperatures, water conditions, soil fertility, and farm or cultural practices, Piper Sudangrass has yielded from 10 to 40 tons of high quality feed per acre per season in trials throughout the southwestern USA.

### PRUSSIC ACID

*This acid is a toxic, poisonous substance that builds up in the stems of growing Sudangrass and the closely related sorghums. Prussic acid is not a concern with hay produced from Sudangrass fields, only with grazed or pastured fields. Piper Sudangrass is noted for its lower potential for prussic acid problems. To reduce the chances of poisoning animals feeding on these forages, the first growth should reach at least 25 inches in height before grazing use. Fields being pastured should not be stressed for water as this tends to cause an increase in prussic acid content in the plants. Frosted acreage should not be grazed if there is any succulent new growth present. This faster growing succulent growth tends to have a higher concentration of poison and, because it is more succulent and green, the animals tend to prefer to graze this regrowth first. After there is not more new growth in the fall, the dried and cured frozen plant can be safely grazed. It is not recommended that horses be grazed or pastured on Sudangrass fields as they seem to be more susceptible to prussic acid poisoning than other grazing animals such as cattle or sheep.*

## PLANTING SUDANGRASS SEED

<u>PRODUCTION</u>	<u>PLANTING RATE PER ACRE</u>	
	<u>Broadcast</u>	<u>Drill</u>
Hay	50-100 lbs	45-80 lbs
Greenchop	35-60 lbs	30-50 lbs
Grazing	35-60 lbs	30-50 lbs

On later plantings or where extremely fine-stemmed hay is desired, the higher planting rates should be used to insure a good stand of finer stemmed plants for harvest.

LAND PREPARATION: Prepare a seedbed suitable for a small grain crop. Best results are obtained by planting after April 1<sup>st</sup> or when soil temperature is above 60° F. Apply 100 pounds of actual Nitrogen per acre disced in before planting. Pre-irrigation helps to get Sudan off to a fast start and crowd out weeds. Disc shallowly to kill weeds that appear after the pre-irrigation, prior to planting. Follow with harrow, flat drag, or cultipacker to smooth surface.

PLANTING: April through August 15<sup>th</sup> Using a grain drill, plant seed 2 to 4 inches deep, at least one inch into moist soil; cultipack immediately. Broadcast planting may be done after the seedbed has been prepared and before irrigating. Following broadcast planting, the area should be lightly harrowed to provide seed coverage.

FERTILIZATION: Apply at least 60 pounds of actual Nitrogen per acre after each cutting-either broadcast over the field or apply in the irrigation water.

WEED CONTROL: Broadleaf weeds may be controlled with many good products on the market today. Check with your Fertilizer and Insecticide Representative or local County Extension Office.

IRRIGATION: An established crop on loam soils usually requires 5 to 6 inches of water every three weeks. Sandy soils require more frequent applications.

USES:

- Hay** – Cut when plants are in boot and early bloom stage for highest production and highest feed value (usually approx. 36 inches in height).
- Pasture** – Star grazing only after plants have reached 25 inches in height and do not stress for moisture.
- Greenchop** – Cut at 36 to 42 inches in height for best results and regrowth.

**PIPER  
SUDANGRASS**

**SEEDS  
WEST** INC.  
*The Bermudagrass Specialists*