

4Ever Green: More Information

4Ever Green is the first photo period sensitive forage sorghum to be introduced to the seed industry of the United States and is protected by PVP (Plant Variety Protection). Its initial introduction was to replace corn for silage in areas where moisture is limited. 4Ever Green has the capability of producing yields up to 45 tons of silage per acre in comparison to corn silage production in the same area with yields of 23 to 25 tons per acre. Moisture requirements for 4Ever Green is 1/3 that of corn.

Conventional forages sorghums when stressed will change from the vegetative stage of growth to the reproductive stage produce a flag leaf and attempt to produce a panicle. Under severe drought stress conditions this can occur at heights of two to three feet which results in silage of low yields and poor quality. Under the same conditions 4Ever Green will slow down its growth, roll its leaves, and wait for a rain. When rain occurs or the plant is irrigated the response is prompt. The plant continues its growth producing 20 plus large dark green leaves. This prompt response to moisture is due to 4Ever Green's root system (similar to corn).

The stalks of 4Ever Green will reach heights in excess of 12 feet and have 21 plus leaves per stalk. These leaves can reach 4 inches wide and 3 feet long. The high number of leaves produced result in a large plant in that each leaf produced emerges from the center of the plant. To produce this many leaves the stalk must be larger than most other forages. After the plant reaches four feet in height the plant is producing a new leaf every 3 1/2 days. Cut a conventional forage plant 3 to 4 foot off the ground and you have only pith in the center of the stalk. Make the same cut on a 4 Ever Green plant and you will be able to unroll leaf after leaf with the center of the stalk being a very small yellowish green leaf growing toward the top of the plant. There will be pith only on the lower portion of the plant - most of the plant will consist of rolled leaves. Harvest of plant should occur at 6 feet in height or 70 days which ever comes first. Use of a crimper is recommended. Cattle will eat the entire bale.

When growing for hay or grazing whether drilled or planted broadcast we recommend no more than 35 pounds per acre. Seeding rates will vary from area to area. In some areas in Central Texas and the Rolling Plains many farmers plant as much as 130 pounds of seed per acre of hybrid forages for hay or grazing. In West Texas and the Central Plains the seeding rates drop to a much less amount.

If the crop is to be used for green chop, silage, wind break or green manure the seeding rate can be reduced to as little as 12 pounds of seed per acre planted in 30 to 40 inch rows.

Due to the "stay green" characteristics and photo period sensitivity of 4Ever Green, and with proper fertilizer and available moisture multiple cuttings or grazing are possible. The plant requires 12 hours and 20 minutes of daylight to stay in the vegetative stage of growth. When day length becomes less, the plant changes from the vegetative stage of growth to the reproductive stage. In Central Texas seeds planted after the first of April will not begin to "boot" and form a panicle until the first week of October. This offers the farmer a wide "window" of harvest and enables him to harvest at his convenience.

This long growing season offers the grower several choices depending on his intended use of the crop. A hay producer can have multiple cuttings of hay, cut a hay crop followed by grazing the re-growth. Due to the many leaves produced by the plant, animals will graze the plant to the ground, because the plant consists of only rolled leaves and is very palatable and nutritious when the re-growth is grazed at a 3 to 4 foot in height.

4Ever Green is ideal for the cattleman or dairyman who is cell grazing. Plants at 4 to 5 feet in height consist of almost all leaves. There is more protein in the leaves of a stalk than in the stem. In cell grazing we recommend turning in on the fields before plants get taller than 5 feet. At this earlier stage of growth the plant is all leaf and high in protein and the cattle will eat the plant to the ground. Unlike conventional sorghum x sudangrass, where you must not cut or graze shorter than 6 to 8 inches, you can allow your cattle to graze to the ground. By doing this you will get re-growth coming from the crown roots creating multiple tillers arising from each plant.

Silage and Green Chop crops are usually planted at a seeding rate of 12 pounds of seed per acre in 30 to 40 inch rows. To produce a silage crop of 4Ever Green it takes 1/3 less water than corn and it has the potential of producing up to twice the tonnage as corn. In areas of lower rainfall where corn silage production is risky 4Ever Green is rapidly replacing corn for green chop and sila