Observations on Non-dormant Alfalfa Cultivars at two locations in Jamaica

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[Abstract]

In an effort to expand the base of shrubby legumes for small ruminant production in Jamaica, five alfalfa cultivars (Creoula, CW-89132, DK-189, DK-191 and FL-99) were evaluated against stylosanthes cultivar Stylo-184 in solid-seed rows at the Hounslow and Bodles Stations. The trail was established in May (Hounslow) and June (Bodles) 2000as a randomised block design with four replications. Each row was 2m long and was sown with 1g of seed. Plant height, number of branches and root and shoot weights were measured 12 weeks post emergence. All cultivars attained significantly (P<0.001) greater height at Bodles (47.7cm average) than at Hounslow (35.5 cm average). F1-99 and DK-189 grew taller than the average of Creoula, CW-89132 and DK-191 by 3.2cm. There was no significant (P>0.05) cultivar x site interaction for branches, but root dry weight per plant was higher at Bodles (2.22 g average) and shoot dry weight lower (8.2 g) than at Hounslow (1.61 and 13.4 g) respectively. Compared to Stylo-184 the alfalfa cultivars, on average, had significantly (P<0.001) fewer branches (4.5 vs. 10.5 per plant and lower root (1.74 vs. 2.81 g) and shoot mass (6.4 vs. 32.9 g) per plant. Among the alfalfa DK-189 and FL-99 were better for all parameters. The values for DK-189, FL-99 and the average for the other three cultivars were: 10.6, 6.1 and 5.7 for branches/plant, 2.2, 2.4 and 1.4 g for shoot mass/ plant.

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