

How high should we cut forages?

Most forages can tolerate low cutting but they will produce higher yields and live longer if they are cut a little higher (see Table below). There are no fixed rules and farmers need to develop their own cutting management as they gain experience with a new species or variety. For example, 'Napier' grass should occasionally be cut close to the ground to stimulate growth of new tillers from the base.

Suggested cutting heights for different types of forages

Legumes	Cutting height (cm)	Examples
Short stoloniferous legumes	5-10	<i>Arachis pintoii</i>
Erect bushy legumes	20-30	<i>Stylosanthes guianensis</i> <i>Desmanthus virgatus</i>
Shrub and tree legumes	50-100	<i>Gliricidia sepium</i>
Grasses	Cutting height (cm)	Examples
Short stoloniferous grasses	5-10	<i>Brachiaria humidicola</i>
Other grasses	10-30	<i>Brachiaria decumbens</i> <i>Panicum maximum</i> <i>Pennisetum purpureum</i>