360 Forage

soil health + plant health + animal health

FODDER BEETS

Beta vulgaris

Purpose & Fit

High sugar content, good leaf fodder characteristics, high nutritive value, and large yields compared to other forage crops, fodder beets are an energy feed used to replace cereal grains as a source of energy in ruminants. Fodder beets are the highest yielding crop in temperate climates with high organic matter digestibility resulting in lactation values similar or higher than cereal grains.

Growth Pattern

Fodder beets are biennial plants that have a shallow, fleshy, and swollen root. During its first year of growth, vegetable parts develop with dark green leaves horizontally oriented to catch as much light as possible.

Climate & Soil

Soil salinity tolerance is moderate for fodder beets, and irrigation with saline water is possible. Well-adapted to colder, moist climates, fodder beets are less sensitive to weather variations than other rooted crops. Frost's below 27°F will damage seedlings.

Planting

Suggested row spacing is 12" – 18" with an in-row spacing of 4" – 6". Irrigate throughout summer months to maximize yield.

Grazing

Unable to withstand frosts, roots will require harvesting. Strip grazing will minimize soil losses from harvesting. Using a one week transition with 2lb of fodder beets a day, feed dairy cows up to 30lb/day of fresh fodder beets. Supplement fodder beets with rapeseed, ground linseed, or ground sunflower seed to correct high saturated fatty acid content conditions created from hay and fodder beet diets.

Quick Data

Seeds/LB:
24,000

Optimum Growth Range:
46°F - 77°F

Seeding Depth:
0.75" - 1.00" Depth

Min Time To Emergence:
10 - 15 days

Planting Rate (Monoculture):
1 Lb/A - 2 Lb/A

Tons of Dry Matter an Acre:
13-45 (Root), 4-8 (leaf)

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