MasterGraze & Cowpeas

MasterGraze, a BMR tillering corn that is ready for grazing in 60 days, complements cowpeas, a vining summer legume, quite well. It is a highly productive forage to extend corn silage supplies as well, and works for grazing during the time when cool season grasses enter the "summer slump". Mastergraze can be slow to take off, and the leafy cowpeas suppress weeds in the gaps before the MasterGraze canopy closes. Soybeans have been used in the past, and cowpeas have been substituted for soybeans in this role, mostly because they make a more palatable forage and their viney nature makes the Mastergraze an ideal "trellis" to support their growth. Cowpea has a deep taproot to weather drought, and fixes nitrogen as well.

MasterGraze is a corn and must be planted with a corn planter. It is often planted in 15-inch rows—

32,000 to 36,000 plants per acre on low to medium fertility soil or on doughty soils where moisture availability can be a limiting factor.

34,000 to 38,000 plants per acre on medium fertility soils

36,000 to 40,000 on high fertility soils, with no moisture limitations.

(Double back to split the rows with a 30-inch spaced corn planter). Population will depend on available soil moisture and fertility.

To establish cowpeas, go back over the field with a drill in a perpendicular direction to the MasterGraze rows at approximately 50-60 lbs/A.

As for feeding, if harvested or grazed just before tasseling, the mix will produce at least 12% protein, but actually feeds at a higher level than this because MasterGraze is so digestible at this stage, and often protein supplementation won't be needed.

It can be grazed, direct chopped and fed as green chop, or cut, wide swathed and then tedded 3-4 hours after cutting, wilted and then windrowed and baled. Success can be had with baleage, although it will be more of a challenge. Because of the sheer mass of the material, raking and tedding can increase ash content and lowers forage quality. For that reason, we'd much rather see the crop in a grazing or green-chop scenario.

At A Glance

- Good summer production in approximately 60 day window
- High quality, summer forage and soil cover—MasterGraze is BMR with reduced lignin for highly digestible fiber
- Nutritional balance between grass and legume—highly digestible protein
- Easy doublecropping with cool season annual grasses and legumes.
- Does well in warm, moist conditions
- Cowpeas provide early weed control

Best Uses

Grazing, green chop, baleage

Establishment

Plant after soils are 60-65 degrees and rising (for most rapid germination of cowpeas)

Seeding rate: MasterGraze (with corn planter):

32,000 to 36,000 plants per acre on low to medium fertility soil or on doughty soils where moisture availability can be a limiting factor.

34,000 to 38,000 plants per acre on medium fertility soils

36,000 to 40,000 on high fertility soils, with no moisture limitations.

Cowpeas (drilled, preferably across MasterGraze rows): 50-60 lbs/A

Summer Annual

Southeast AgriSeeds LLC
257 Pinson Rd.
Rome, GA 30161
(717) 687-6224

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Cowpeas fit well with BMR sorghum-sudan and sudangrass products as well, but the MasterGraze gives a premium in yield, protein, and digestibility, and those who use this combination to stretch corn silage supplies report a smooth transition with no drop in milk production.

This is a one-cut or graze system; for grazing, strip grazing is recommended.

Herbicide: Use a broad-spectrum pre-plant herbicide such as glyphosate, gramaxone, or glufosinate. No post plant herbicide is needed if the proper population is achieved.

Fertility: Apply 50 to 60 units of N which should be available up front and within the 60 day growing period primarily for the MasterGraze corn.

Note: Although the cowpeas are a summer annual legume and they do fix nitrogen, the majority of the nitrogen that is fixed is utilized by the cowpeas for their prolific growth. They will also take up some soil available nitrogen early on and this will enable them to develop a quicker canopy (weed suppressing ground cover), so adequate N is needed for the MasterGraze corn, which will grow more rapidly during the last 30 days of the 60 day cycle.

Must be inoculated with N-Dure Peanut Inoculant for best nitrogen fixation by the cowpeas.

Harvest Note: This material is very wet and heavy, you need to drive very slow in low range to both cut it and to ted it. Ted it and keep it wide swathed; the material is very wet and it will wilt down considerably.

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