

Q/

What are the dangerous grasses that cattle must avoid eating?

ASK THE EXPERT

Compiled by Christine Katende

Send your questions to features@ug.nationmedia.com

It is common knowledge in cattle keeping communities that not all green plants are actually edible for cattle.

In fact, the knowledge has been known to be passed on traditionally from generation to generation.

It is worth noting as well that this knowledge has been obtained from observation of

cattle tending to avoid certain forage plant species while grazing or through tragedy where one loses an animal or animals after they have eaten certain types of grass.

Plants naturally have defence mechanisms that help them ward off un-warranted destruction.

The mechanisms vary from thorns, pungent smells or irritants to poisonous substances



within their leaves, flowers, fruits stems or roots.

The most common poisonous plant species seen in foraging areas for cattle are; Mani-hot species: The commonest plant in this group is cassava. Certain types of cassava con-

tain levels of toxic compound, cyanide in roots and leaves. Cassava grown during drought conditions can contain levels so high of cyanide that ingestion of 50gm of the plant tuber could kill an adult cow.

Datura species: These are

usually referred to as the common thorn apple locally known as amaduudu or entulabula. This plant contains a very toxic compound called atropine. The plant's whole body is full of the poisonous chemical, with the highest concentration being in flowers and seeds.

Lantana species: These are known as tick berry, red sage or simply "lantana" locally known as akayukiyuki. This is the commonest poisonous plant in the cattle corridor of Uganda. The poisonous compound in there is a triterpene. The poison is known to be in the un-ripe green berries.

Answered by Samuel Ssewagudde, a veterinary doctor affiliated to Genesis East Africa limited.

At what age should I set my kuroiler birds to free range?

Kuroiler birds do not differ much in nature from other breeds of chicken.

As chicks, growing up, Kuroilers need similar requirements.

They need importantly; warmth, water, feed, proper ventilation, lighting, protection from disease causing agents, vaccination and protection from environment extremes.

They must also be protected from predators. All these needs must be met well during brooding and rearing, for the venture to be a success.

It is largely expected for most birds that by the end of 2.5 months of age, they can be let off to a life of fending for themselves, if one wishes to keep them under free range system.

Past two and a half months, the birds can easily regulate their own body temperature having

acquired active immunity from the vaccinations.

Answered by Samuel Ssewagudde, a veterinary doctor affiliated to Genesis East Africa limited.



Where can I find genuine kuroilers?

Genuine Kuroilers are mainly sold at the NAG-RIC & DB (National Animal Genetics Research Centre and Data Bank) in Entebbe and Chick master hatcheries in Mukono.

These are the official suppliers of first filial generation kuroilers in Uganda.

Most of the so called kuroilers that farmers sell to each other are actually and those got from un-official sources are second rate (products of mostly related first filial generation) and less productive (vigorous).

Answered by Samuel Sse-

wagudde, a veterinary doctor affiliated to Genesis East Africa limited.



What are the advantages of rearing kuroilers over other breeds?

Pigs are single stomach animals. Their efficiency in digesting

ter that is good for bacteria to feast on.

Bacterial action on organic matter breaks down some of the organic

the time the faeces come out, they are already smelly.

The smell in the faeces combined with that of urine can make it unbearable sometimes.



To keep smell away from the pig house with a concrete floor, one must clean the house regularly by sweeping out the faeces and washing up.

It is also important to have proper ventilation in the pig house. So as one plans the house, they should ensure its windows are large enough to allow for proper flow of air.

Answered by Samuel Ssewagudde, a

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