

Grazing Tolerance of Crioula Alfalfa in Southern Brazil

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The introduction of alfalfa by the Italian and German settlers during the Rio Grande do Sul colonization has allowed the formation of a landrace, called Crioula, which is very well adapted and is used primarily for hay production in Southern Brazil.

The objective of this work was to assess the grazing tolerance of different sources of Crioula alfalfa and to select grazing tolerant plants among those different populations. The trial was carried out in randomized complete blocks with six reps. There were three Crioula populations, from different locations as follows: Chile, Ledur and Roque. As grazing tolerant and grazing sensitive checks were used the cultivars ABT 805 and CUF 101 respectively. The trial was sown on October 2001 and was continuously grazed during 13 months, always leaving a 3-5 cm stubble. After that period, the grazing persistence was evaluated through the evaluation of the percentage of surviving plants, compared to the their initial number in the beginning of the trial. The results are presented in the Figure 1 below and show that the grazing tolerant cultivar (ABT 805) presented a significant higher number of surviving plants at the end of the trial, while the sensitive one (CUF 101) the smallest. The results also show that there was a significant variation among the Crioula populations, pointing out to possible shifts in tolerance, due to local conditions or management. Finally, the data also points out to the possibility to select grazing tolerant plants among the different Crioula populations, which now is under way by our group.

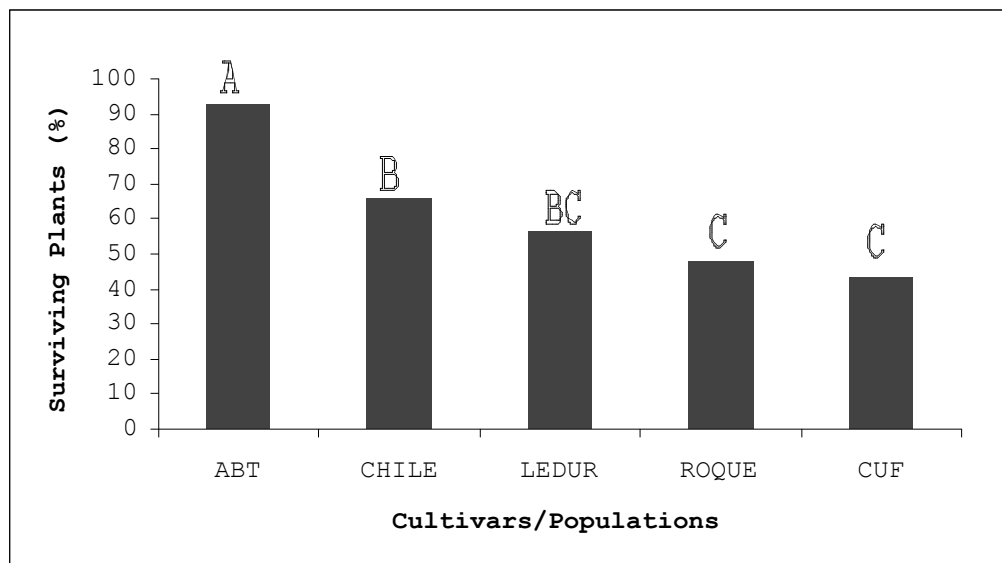


Figure 1. Surviving plants after 13 months of grazing. Means followed by the same letter do not differ by the Duncan's test (0.05).