Developing Countries Farm Radio Network

Pack 14, Item 3

Type: Script

Date

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**Groundnut (peanut) hay - good feed in the dry season** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Information on this subject area was requested by DCFRN participants in Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Honduras, India, Nigeria, Paraguay, St. Lucia, and Tanzania.

Presenter: Glenn Powell

**Special notes**

Groundnuts (*Arachis hypogea*) are known as peanuts in some countries. Please use the term most familiar to farmers in your area.

Before using the information in this item, please read the notes at the end concerning related DCFRN items.

**Suggested introduction**

We at this radio station are part of a worldwide information network that gathers farming information from developing countries all over the world. It's the Developing Countries Farm Radio Network, sponsored by Massey Ferguson and the University of Guelph, and financially supported by the Canadian International Development Agency and by many interested Canadians.

Through this Network, we bring you information on ways to increase food supplies for your family, or to sell—ways that other farmers have used successfully.

Once again today our subject is feeding livestock during the dry season. Here’s Glenn Powell.

**POWELL:** Not long ago on this program, we talked about feedingcrop residues to your animals during the dry season. Now my question for you is—do you or some of your neighbours grow groundnuts (peanuts)? If so, what happens to the crop residues from those groundnuts?

Dr. Bakaray Touray is a farming expert in The Gambia in West Africa, and he says that groundnut plants make very good hay to feed to your animals. Here are some of his thoughts.

He says: "Over the years, many of our farmers have made an effort, at harvest time, to collect and take home some groundnut hay to feed their draught oxen during the long, dry months before it's time to start ploughing. Some farmers even put it on a platform for safekeeping. Others have collected the beautiful green leaves and small stems and put them into a bag to take home to feed their sheep and goats. In some areas where there is a good market for groundnut hay, farmers sell it to people who keep horses and donkeys."

In spite of this, however, Dr. Touray says that "a huge amount of groundnut hay is left lying on the ground after harvest—after the groundnuts have been removed. The cattle stand watching the farmers winnowing, waiting for their turn, then they move in andstart to eat the hay off the ground. Unfortunately, however, much of the hay is spoiled at this time by the cattle trampling on it."

Dr. Touray feels that groundnut hay is the most valuable crop residue his farmers have, and he urges them to collect it and keep it for feeding during the long dry season.

After saving all their groundnut hay, he then advises them also to keep the stalks or stover from maize (corn), millet, and sorghum for feeding to their animals, but, he says, "groundnut hay must come first because it makes the cattle grow faster." The reason for this is that good groundnut hay has a lot of protein in it; protein that animals need to be strong and healthy.

Finally, Dr. Touray says: "Just as some farmers feed groundnut hay to their oxen to keep them strong and healthy, they should also feed it to their cows to get more milk—and to their young growing animals, to make them grow faster."

Now if you'd like to use groundnut hay for your livestock, or even if you already do so, here are some hints.

First, I must mention that the best groundnut hay you can feed to your livestock has lots of leaves on it—that's because it's the leaves of this plant that have the most protein. There are several reasons why leaves will fall off of the plants. They'll fall off if the groundnuts are harvested too late, if they're dried too quickly under the hot sun, or if they're left lying in the field for too long.

So, if possible, try not to leave the plants lying on the ground for more than a day or two after lifting them. Then finish drying them on racks or in stacks. Make sure air can circulate through them to dry them. However, don't stack any plants that are still wet from rain or dew, as they'll get mouldy and rot. Dry themfirst.

After the groundnuts have been removed from the vines, store the groundnut hay to feed to your animals. Keep it dry—sheltered from the rain if necessary. It's best to store it up off of the ground—perhaps on a platform, so it doesn't get damp and mouldy. This would also help protect it from termites.

Then in the dry season, when your cattle and other livestock can't find fresh feed to eat, you can give them this groundnut hay. They will enjoy eating it, and it will help to keep them strong and healthy until the rains come again next time.

Serving Agriculture, the Basic Industry, this is Glenn Powell.

**Notes**

1. For maximum benefit to your audience, we suggest that before using this item, you use information from:

Crop Residues as Animal Feed in the Dry Season - DCFRN Package 14, Item 2.

In another DCFRN item, wooden drying racks or frames are described for drying groundnut plants. For the details, you might wish to re-use information from:

A Drying Structure for Groundnuts - DCFRN Package 8, Item 1A.

For background information on why groundnuts and other legumes are good sources of proteins, see:

Legumes, Our Best Source of Protein from Plants - Why and How - DCFRN Package 5, Item 3.

**Information sources**

1. DCFRN participant Mr. Désiré Agoundote, Bénin.

2. Better Farming Series No. 17 - Groundnuts (1977 edition, 40 pages), available from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Rome, Italy. <https://nature-and-farming.blogspot.com/2017/07/better-farming-series-17-groundnuts.html>

3. Animal Traction in Africa (1982, 490 pages; photograph on page 417), by Peter Munzinger. Published by GTZ GmbH (German Agency for Technical Cooperation), Eschborn, West Germany. <https://www.scribd.com/document/106284124/Animal-Traction-in-Africa>