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SCALING UP THE FODDER VALUE CHAIN

Quality Driven Production of Lablab, Lucerne and Napier Grass for Botswana SMMEs

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WHY THIS MATTERS

Dry seasons expose a structural feed gap

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6.1%

fewer cattle

1.74m (2015) → 1.64m (2025)

Meanwhile, smallstock numbers are rising

+5.5%

GOATS

1,271,407 in 2025

from 1,205,238 in 2015

+33.3%

SHEEP

323,279 in 2025

from 242,432 in 2015

Drought, limited water, bush encroachment and soil degradation intensify seasonal feed pressure.

Feed Demand 6.9 mil MT annually, ≈90% imported feed

The resilience challenge is also a local production opportunity.

Sources: Statistics Botswana, BW Agricultural Census (Sept 2026); National Fodder Production Strategy (2026).

THE SMME OPPORTUNITY

Fodder strategy creates a resilient value chain

Value is created year-round

01	02	03	04	05	06
INPUTS	→ PRODUCE	→ HARVEST	→ CONSERVE	→ ASSURE	→ MARKET
Seed • soil • water	Establish • manage	Time • cut • handle	Hay • silage	Test • grade	Package • distribute

Where SMMEs can win

Reliable supply • consistent quality • conservation • market access

Resilience becomes a business model when feed is available beyond the rainy season.

GET THE FOUNDATION RIGHT

Establishment success starts before planting

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01 SOIL

Build fertility, structure and pH around the crop's needs.

02 SPECIES

Match adaptation, intended use and livestock type to local conditions.

03 WEATHER

Plan for temperature extremes, rainfall variability and flood risk.



A strong stand begins with three aligned decisions.



LABLAB PURPUREUS

A flexible seasonal legume for Botswana

2.5–7 t/ha forage yield

14% crude protein

- Annual or short-duration perennial
- Rongai and Highworth cultivars
- Well-drained sandy clay soils
- Plant Nov–Dec at 13 kg/ha
- Harvest at flowering or early podding



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Lucerne: digestible high-protein perennial forage

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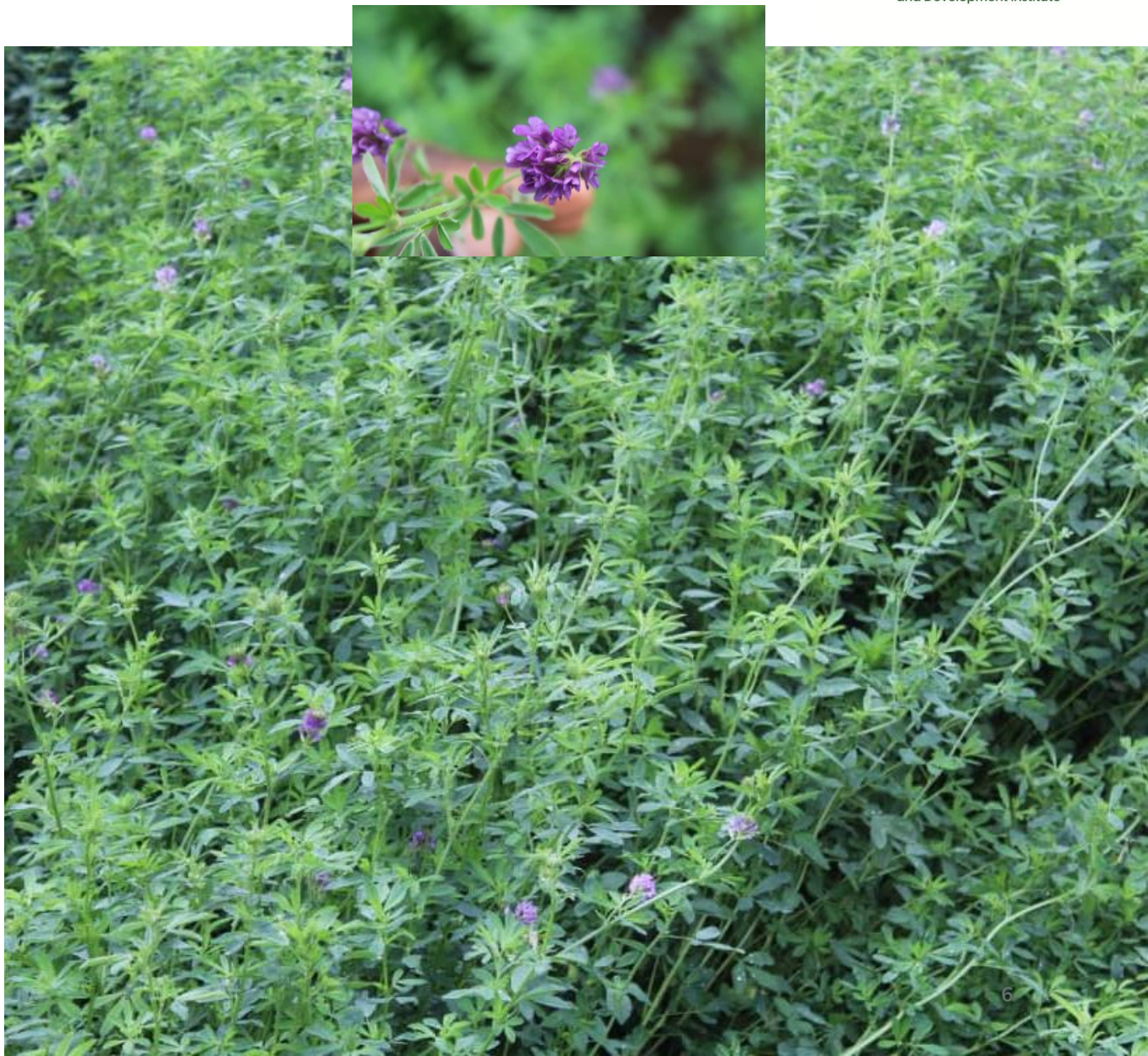
Medicago sativa

8–15 t/ha

15–25% crude protein

- Drought-tolerant perennial legume
- Deep, well-drained, non-acidic soil
- Cut every 4–5 weeks at early flowering
- Use as pasture or hay

A strong quality proposition where soils and management fit.



Napier grass

Cenchrus purpureus

>15 **t/ha forage yield**

10% **crude protein**

- Perennial grass, establish from cuttings/root splits
- Cut every 6–8 weeks
- Feed fresh or conserve

High biomass. Repeat harvests. Multiple feed forms.





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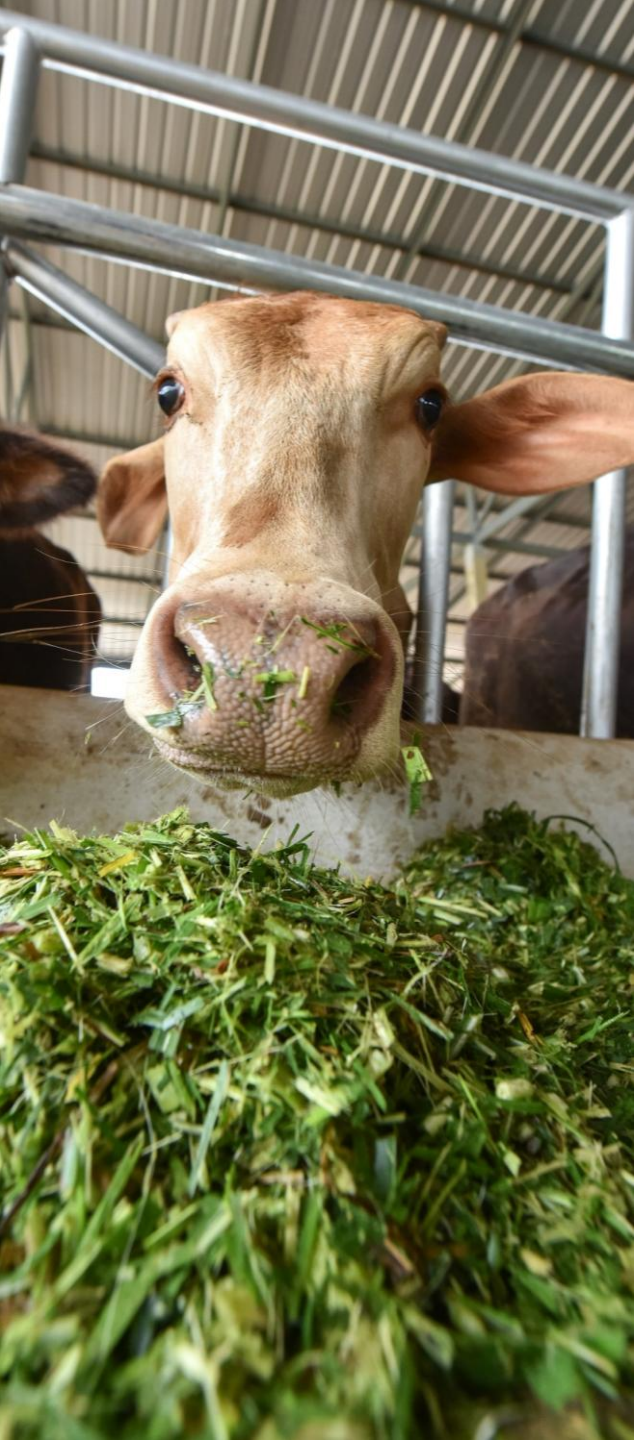
Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) for premium yields (Risk Mitigation)

- Soil Management and Land Preparation
- Strategic Variety Selection and High Quality Seed Sourcing

- **Water smart irrigation scheduling**
- **Hygiene & Precise Harvesting Protocols**
- **Integrated weed and pest management (IPM)**

Quality is not an accident; it is a result of good agricultural practices.



CONSERVATION

Turn peak growth into dry-season supply

HAY

Dry/cure green fodder to 15% moisture or less to stop biological activity and heat build-up.

SILAGE

Store fresh, juicy fodder without oxygen so fermentation preserves nutrients.

Conservation is the bridge between rainy-season production and dry-season sales.



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FROM INTEREST TO ACTION

Four moves to enter the fodder value chain

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01

TEST

Know your soil and irrigation water.

→

02

SELECT

Match crop, climate, livestock and end use.

→

03

PRODUCE

Establish well; harvest at the right stage.

→

04

CONSERVE + SELL

Protect quality beyond the growing season.

How can NARDI Support?

Soil Tests

Irrigation Water Tests

Animal Feed Tests

Technical Expertise (Fodder, Livestock Feed Formulation etc)

Lablab Seed Sale

Start with the customer's feed need — then build the production system backwards.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Dependable feed.
Resilient herds.
Viable SMMEs.

Grow with quality • Conserve with purpose • Sell with confidence

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