

TOTAL NUMBER OF TILLERS OF DIFFERENT ACESIONS OF *PANICUM MAXIMUM*, JACQ

NÚMERO TOTAL DE PERFILHOS EM DIFERENTES ACESSOS DE *PANICUM MAXIMUM* JACQ.

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The productivity of forage grasses is due to continuous emission of leaves and tillers, ensuring the restoration of leaf area after cutting or grazing, thus ensuring the sustainability of forage. This study aimed to assess the total number of tillers in different accessions of *Panicum maximum* Jacq. The experiment was carried in field belonging to the Instituto de Zootecnia located in Nova Odessa / SP. Evaluated two new accessions *Panicum maximum*, and two commercial cultivars. The cultivars tested were Aruana, Milenio, NO 2487, NO 78, and the two latter belonging to the Germoplasm Collection of the IZ. The experimental design was in randomized complete block with four replications. The experimental area consisted of 16 plots of 10 m² (5 x 2 m) each. The experimental area was analyzed and according to the results, received dolomitic limestone corresponding 2t /ha, two months before the implementation of the experiment. Sowing was made by broadcast together with 80 kg/ha of P₂O₅ in the form of single superphosphate. After 60 days of implantation of the experiment it was made a leveling of the plots to a height of about 15 cm. After this it was applied 250g of the 20-00-20 fertilizer/plot. Thirty days after the standardization it was evaluated the total number of tillers of the cultivars, using a metal frame of 0.5 x 0.5m which was thrown at random on each of the 16 plots, leaving one meter of each extremity, and all tillers which were within the frame counted. After finished the counting of all tillers, the plots cut again at a height of approximately 15 cm. The second evaluation took place after thirty days, and it was again counted the total number of tillers following the same procedure. The results were analyzed by Tukey test at 5% after transforming the data to log(x). For the first evaluation there was no statistical difference in the total number of tillers between cultivars. But, in the second evaluation, the total number of tillers of NO 78 cultivar was higher than the Milenio and NO 2487 cultivars and the Aruana's tillers number did not differ from the others. So it is concluded that the cultivar NO 78 is promising in respect the total tillers, an important feature in a forage plant.

Key words: Aruana, forage plant, germoplasm collection.