

## **Fibre sorghum: influence of harvest methods on plant moisture and fibre content**

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Although several experiments carried out in Italy and Europe during the last years on fibre sorghum have allowed to define the main agronomic techniques for this species, little information is available on harvest methods.

In a trial carried out by Cereal Research Institute (Rome, Italy) in 2001 and 2002, at Inviolatella farm (41°58' N, 12°28' E), three different harvest methods, using conventional farm machines, were tested to evaluate the natural drying of biomasses in the field, using the medium hybrid H 133 and the late H 132. The three harvest methods were: whole stem harvest (mower); whole stem harvest (mower) + conditioning (Cambridge roll); stem chopping (chopper).

The harvest was carried out 14 days after flowering of each hybrid. The following data were recorded: stem height at last blade joint; stem diameter; aboveground fresh and dry biomass. Samples were scanned on NIRSystem 6500 near-infrared reflectance spectrophotometer to determine concentrations of NDF (neutral detergent fibre), ADF (acid detergent fibre) and ADL (acid detergent lignin). The moisture content of biomass drying in the field was measured by weekly samplings in order to determine the best harvest time in relation to hybrid maturing class, harvest method and weather conditions.