

Summary

Four successive growth periods (G1, G2, G3, and G4) of *Panicum maximum* cv. Vencedor were studied, observing a lag time of 28 days between two consecutive growths, in a split plot block design with three replications. Shoot apex survival and crude protein content were also determined. The trial was conducted in a dark yellow-red clay Latosol at EMBRAPA-Cerrados in the Federal District, Brazil. Observations were made during each growth period, at four stages (28, 56, 84, 112, and 140 days), by clipping the grass in appropriate plots at 20 cm above soil level. Regression analysis indicated a linear growth, with four daily growth rates (29, 18, 20, and 8 kg DM/ha per day), for the growth periods G1, G2, G3, and G4, respectively. Growth period G4 is not appropriate for deferment if this grass is to be used by the end of the wet season. Percent survival of shoot apexes was directly proportional to plant age, and was higher for G4 in all sampling periods. Data suggest that cutting should be conducted from day 28 to day 84 to combine optimal yield and forage quality.