

# The Efficiency of Calliandra when fed in a Mixed Diet to Young Goats

*Thompson, C., McDonald, D. and Jennings, P. (1995)*

## **[Introduction]**

Calliandra colothyris are small leguminous trees that have long been popular in the tropics as ornamentals, shade trees and green manure. Plantations are easily established by direct seeding or by planting seedlings or large cuttings. The trees grow with almost incredible speed, averaging heights of 2.5 – 3.5 m in 6 – 9 months. When cut to 1 m above ground, the stumps coppice readily, often becoming 3 m tall within six months. The plant seems extremely adaptable thriving in a wide range of soils and at altitudes from 150 to 1,500 m. The dark green compound leaves are feather-like (like those of *Leucaena* and other Mimosaceae species) and fold at night.

Although untested as a forage source *Calliandra colothyris* foliage contains 17% crude protein, is produced abundantly 10 – 15 t/ha fresh weight (5.5 t DM) and seems palatable to livestock. The foliage contains no known toxin (like *Leucaena*) to limit its inclusion in a diet. However, tannin levels are high. It is readily browsed by goats and cattle who relish the leaves and succulent stems. The daily DM intake of goats may vary from 1.3 to more than 5% of bodyweight. The higher intakes are required to satisfy needs by younger kids, growing goats, small goats and high milkers.