

Renovation of permanent grassland in the farm

Farm: “ **Gaec de la Basse Cour** ”

Location: **Calvados France**

Background

This organic farm comprises:

- 137 dairy cows, 190 LU
- 175 ha of grassland, mainly permanent and 25 ha of crops
- 3 full time employees

The environment of the farm is based on:

- Medium clay for the soil
- Temperate and oceanic climate, due to the coast with an altitude of 30m

About grassland management:

Dominant meadow species (after renovation) :English Grass Ray, Tall Fescue, Meadow Fescue, Timothy, Purple Clover, Hybrid Clover, White Clover, Chicory and Plantain

Interculture composition (stolen culture) : Fodder Rape, Italian Ray Grass, Diploid Oats, Oats and Radish Forage



Types of forage conservation :

- Hay (drying in barn)
- Wrappers

Detailed description

Organic system based on grassland system with conservation methods in hay (dried in barn) and wrapping. The goal is to graze with 70 ha accessible for cows.

Permanent renovation of permanent meadows (since 2015) with planting of a stolen crop (intercropping) in the spring or autumn, which is pasture (5 pastures) and then destroyed for reseeding the permanent meadow (multi-species) to next spring, composed of English Rye Grass, Tall Fescue, Meadow Fescue, Timothy, Purple Clover, Hybrid Clover, White Clover, Chicory and Plantain.

Multi-species grassland seedlings in 4 stages : destruction of rotavator intercropping, 2 cover-crop passages, sowing of the meadow in the combined seedbed and 2 passes of cultipacker roller.

Results

This is a very successful technique for the moment, with a benefits from dairy production (especially during inter-crop grazing) and the presence of clover in the permanent meadow thanks to spring sowing.

This technique has been put in place to increase production and therefore products and reduce food costs.



Adoption criteria

Farmers start a program of renovation of permanent grasslands (after a trip to Finistère, Brittany) for a better production, especially in summer.

They pay attention in the renovation of meadows with the establishment of intercropping before the sowing of the meadow to clean the soil while maintaining good productivity.

They sow the meadow in the spring because it's too wet in the fall.

The success is due to an optimal recovery of multi-species grasslands through barn drying.

Future prospects

Wishing to generalize this innovation to all the meadows to be renovated in order to improve as much as possible the food values of grazed meadows and distributed fodder.

This innovation can be disseminated to the means of:

- pasture promotion events, type "Prairiales"
- specialized websites
- exchange forums

The limits identified: the climate at the time of sowing, the absence of plowing which requires to mechanically destroy the cover of intercrops and the cost of seeds quite high in organic farming.