



Effective and better ley establishment after winter barley



Magnus Nilsson, Eldsberga

1 Description of the innovation



Better land use and better ley when sowing ley in the autumn

In a period of shortage of forage, Magnus established ley in the autumn. This solved the problem of forage supply, but also proved to generate well established leys, so the method became permanent.

Magnus sows the ley in September, after harvest of an early crop like winter barley or rape. Clover establishment is known to be more risky in autumn. In previous trials, sowing in September has generally been considered to be too late. However, this system shows the opposite, as the clover content is higher and more evenly distributed. This is the result of no competing cereal crop. There is also no need for chemical weed control, which could suppress the clover, or any risk of straw covering and damaging the new crop.



“Not having to sow again saves on seed. It is a good thing to avoid killing the valuable clover.”



Good land use and a high-quality ley with more clover and less weeds

An expansion strategy has become a permanent method for better ley

Magnus started sowing ley after winter cereal to gain fast expansion of ley. The ley is established in pure stand, but a mixture with a small amount of cereal has also been tested. A ley established by this method does not generate EFA in the current EU subsidy system. A ley established in the traditional way, undersown in a spring cereal, would do this.



2 Farm description

ENVIRONMENT

Loam, sand and peat soils.

Temperate continental climate.

Altitude: 45 m a.s.l.

Slope: 0 %.

The farm is situated in Halland, south-west Sweden.

GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

Grazing : Yes.

Temporary grassland based on red clover, white clover, timothy, perennial ryegrass and meadow fescue.

Harvested as silage.

Hires machines for spreading manure.

Offers service as a contractor with several machines.

STRUCTURE

3,5 AWU.

160 ha arable land area, of which 65 ha temporary grassland area.

Rape, peas and winter barley are grown.

ANIMAL PERFORMANCE

140 dairy cows (Procross), producing 10,000 kg milk per year.

WHY IS IT WORKING?

The preceding crop has to be early maturing for early harvest. Winter barley and rape achieve this. Late sowing of ley is risky, especially concerning legumes. It is only successful where the climate is mild enough. In Sweden, this means only in the south of the country. A growth period is needed after sowing the ley for good establishment. Apart from this disadvantage, there are many advantages in sowing ley in pure stands, e.g. less competition for the crop, no need for chemical spraying and no straw to damage the newly established ley plants.