



# Combining valorisation of Natura 2000 grasslands areas, product processing and marketing, improvement of grassland



## Bernard Convié – Ferme de Jambjoule



### 1 Description of the innovation

Bernard Convié and his wife Valérie, lead a mixed farm (meat sheep and dairy cattle combined) based, for sheep, on valorisation of calcareous grasslands (Natural Reserves of which 86% are Natura 2000 areas), transformation of dairy products (cheese and yoghurt), improvement of grassland and seeding of cereals in grassland. The farm is innovative, at least, in three domains: grazing management system, product processing /marketing and forage mixture.

The added value of these practices covers both:

- Economic results
- Contacts with consumers
- Grassland quality (species composition, feeding value)



Bernard Convié pursues a goal of maximum autonomy through :

1. Partnership with public authorities and environmentalists => concerted evolution of working methods over time (15 years). Today Bernard is member of the Walloon herders association
2. Prototyping and development of cheeses (6 kinds mature cheese + fresh cheese and yoghurt) in a new dairy
3. Grassland improvement => trials of several overseeding techniques and material test

## 2 Farm description

### ENVIRONMENT

- Soil types : Clay and Limestone
- Climate : Temperate oceanic
- Altitude : 160 m
- Slope : 5-10%

### GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

Grasslands are grazed and mowed ("improved" grasslands 3 times a year, others one or two times a year). The duration of permanent grassland is longer than 20 years. The grazing management is continuous and rotational stocking. It lasts about 7 months per year. Grass is stored in haylage bales and hay for winter.

### STRUCTURE

**Annual Work Unit: 3,5**

**Agriculture Area: 122 ha UAA**

The farm is managed by Bernard and his wife Valérie. It has 122 ha of UAA, mostly in permanent (36 ha), rangeland (72 ha of Natura 2000 areas) and temporary (14 ha) grasslands. Bernard and Valérie own only 5 ha. The farm belongs to a public owner who behaves like a private (Royal Donation) and the Reserves are often public (Wallonia and Communes) or associative (Ardenne and Gaume, Natagora, LRBPO).

The dairy cattle is Jersey breed (24 lactating cows). The milk production is average: 5,000 kg of milk / cow / year.

Breeds of sheep (310 heads): Roux ardennais and Mergelland.

### WHY IT IS WORKING

- Full valorisation of the opportunity offered by the terroir (Natural Reserves of which 86% are Natura 2000 areas)
- Creation of a local market (direct or intermediate customers)
- Regular trials for forage mixture