



Grazing system, complex forage mixture and conserved forage for dairy goats



Ferme de la Croix de la Grise

1 Description of the innovation

Grazing management system: The rotational grazing system for dairy goats is organized in modules of 3 days delimited by fixed external fences. The first day, goats have access to an area corresponding to one and a half grazing day. This area is demarcated by an electric wire. The electric wire is moved the second and third days, the new daily area corresponds each of these days to 0.75 grazing day. There is no electric back wire. This allows more space the first day but the grass in excess is consumed the second and third days while respecting a maximum of three days per period of stay. The fourth day, the system starts again. The rest period is at least 40 days for controlling goat internal parasites.

Complex forage mixture for temporary grasslands: 14 species of grasses, legumes, chicory, plantain, and forage winter oilseed rape as a starter (1,5 kg/ha).

Forage oilseed rape does not induce a bad taste to the milk. Diversity is appreciated by goats.

Forage conservation technique. When hay is not dry enough, it is harvested by a pick-up loader wagon and it is dried out in barn on wooden pallets between straw bales with a blowing system (3-5 HP).



Grassland quality, Animal health and welfare, Environment quality

The objectives of this organic grazing system are producing high quality grass for dairy goats, decreasing internal parasite pressure, and reducing daily work associated with the move of electric wires (the 4-wire Gallagher system is easy to handle). Seasonal dairy production is harmonized with grass growth. In rainy days of the grazing period, goats have to be fed in barn with hay. Hay should be high quality at that period (hay for winter can be lower quality because there is no milk production at that period). There is thus a necessity to be very flexible in the grazing period. In the complex forage mixture, chicory is used as a dock control mean on wet heavy soils. It provides also minerals, proteins, and tannins.

ENVIRONMENT

Soil type: Clay

Climate: Temperate oceanic

Altitude: 55 m asl

Slope: 5%

GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

Grazing: Yes

Grazing management type: Rotational and strip stocking (one day per plot)

Barn hay drying

Hay produced on temporary grasslands in a 4-cut per year cutting regime

**STRUCTURE**

Annual Work Unit: 2

Agricultural Area: 23.4 ha UAA

Permanent grassland area: 9 ha

Temporary grassland area: 9.2 ha

Annual crop area: 5.2 ha

Breed: Saanen

Stocking rate: 1.1 LU per ha of grassland area

ANIMAL PERFORMANCE

Dairy goat production: 450 l/goat*year

WHY IT IS WORKING?

The system is working because it is small-scale and very flexible. All dairy products are sold as raw milk or raw milk cheese. Consumers highly appreciate milk and cheese quality. There is no intermediates; the added value is kept in the farm. The farm is also educational for children, it welcomes 1,500 children per year. Children bring goats to grassland plots and make other activities including cheese making. At the end of the visit, each child receives a cheese and brings it back home which contributes to product promotion.

A SMALL-SCALE ORGANIC DAIRY GOAT FARM, BASED ON LOCAL RESOURCES, MILK PROCESSING, LOCAL MARKETING AND CHILDREN EDUCATION