



Europe's Most Innovative Grassland Farmers Set for Award Ceremony in Germany in June

Europe's most innovative grassland farmers are set to receive international awards for their innovation and commitment to excellence in grassland. This initiative is part of the three year Inno4Grass Thematic Network project, a €2 million project funded by Horizon 2020. The farmers receiving awards represent eight member states in Europe and are all excelling in grassland and grassland management despite differences in climate, systems and soil types. Each member state has recognised a farmer excelling in grassland through different competitions which took place in the member states.

The eight countries being celebrated at the Inno4Grass award ceremony are Germany, Belgium, France, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden, in which grasslands have a considerable share in the agricultural area and where production of dairy, beef and sheep from grassland is of major economic importance.

The award ceremony is set to take place in Germany from 11th to 12th June 2019. Participants will visit local farms near Oldenburg, Northern Germany to discuss grassland management with different grazing and conservation techniques on the 11th June and will then travel to Hannover for a Grassland Conference and the official award ceremony the following day. The German Ministry for Agriculture is supporting this event.

It was Jean-Marie Velghe who was chosen as representative of the grassland management excellence in Belgium. It must be said that Jean-Marie is considered today in our country as a pioneer of sustainable farming practices in Belgium given his numerous efforts for notably developing no-till techniques, green manure, farmyard manure composting, herbaceous field margins, barn hay drying instead of grass silage, large forage self-sufficiency for cattle feeding

and decreased pesticide and fertilizer use. Arno, the son born in 1987, his wife and his sister are now working in the farm too. They are developing dairy product processing and marketing activities. In 2018, they won three prizes for their cheeses made from "haymilk", a very high-quality milk.



Pictures credit : Arnaud Velghe, Benoit Delaite and Alain Peeters.



More info about Velghe's farm: <https://bit.ly/2TCVFRg>

It is really important for Belgium to participate in this event for the promotion of good practices in European livestock breeding. Project coordinator Arno Krause remarked "I'm looking forward to presenting innovative grassland farmers around Europe with awards for their fantastic achievements in grassland. We call these farmers 'lighthouse farmers', they are shining lights in their countries, providing other farmers with guidance, ideas and knowledge in grassland, so it is important that we recognise their contribution to society in the award ceremony. This is one of the major achievements of the Inno4Grass project".

The Inno4Grass programme strives to bridge the gap between practice and science communities to ensure the implementation of innovative systems on productive grasslands. The long term goal of the project is to increase profitability of European grassland farms and to preserve environmental values across Europe.

See more information on <https://www.inno4grass.eu/fr/>

The following Table shows the award winning farmers and the Inno4Grass contact persons.

Country	Award winners	Inno4Grass Contact	Inno4Grass Contact Email
Ireland	Eddie and Denis O'Donnell	Fergus Bogue	fergus.bogue@teagasc.ie
Germany	Hof Butendiek	Felicitas Kaemena	felicitas.kaemena@lwk-niedersachsen.de
The Netherlands	Hielke and Hanny de Rooij	Agnes van den Pol-van Dasselaar	agnes.vandenpol@wur.nl
Belgium	Jean-Marie Velghe Jean-Marie	Benoit Delaite	b.delaite@trame.be
Poland	Mariusz Duda,	Artur Paszkowski	artpa@up.poznan.pl
Italy	Gavino Pulinas	Rita Melis	rita.melis@ispaam.cnr.it
France	Earl Bordeaux	Fanny Baste-Sauvaire	fanny.baste@apca.chambagri.fr
Sweden	Per and Tore Larsson	Nilla Nilsson-Linde	nilla.nilsson-linde@slu.se

Acknowledgement:

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 727368