

Pasture 10 km from the wintering building with dairy cows

Farm: “ GAEC d’Arazon”

Location: Vosges FRANCE

Farm description

3.8 annual work units

Dairy cows and sheep combined

85 dairy cows and 65 ewes

Organic agriculture

Objective of productivity: 5000L /cows/year

Three main soil types:

- Superficial clay and limestone, deep of about 10 to 40 cm before the limestone rock (130 ha).
- Deep clay soil (75 ha)
- Deep clay soil, relatively close to the river with floods every year (15ha)

Climate

Climate is continental, with cold winter and warm summer. Rain are quite homogenous during the year excepted July and august witch are more dry and with thunderstorm. As for other regions, climatic hazards are more and more frequent and impact grasslands productivity. 2016 was a very rainy years. This amount of rains has impacted the quality of forage: the mows had to be report of 3 weeks at least as usual. 2017 was marked by a cold spring and a reduction of grass growth compared as a « normal year ». And to finish, the summer 2018 was warm and dry with a stop of grass growth since 1st July.

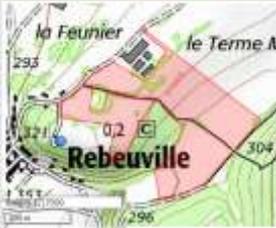
Background

The GAEC d’Arazon is composed of two farms combined in 2007.

First farm:

- The building can house 80 dairy cows
- Enough of storage capacity for forage to feed the herd during winter
- 15 ha of grassland available for pasture





Map of the first place, plots available for grazing are in red

Second farm:

- The old building can house about 50 dairy cows
- Not enough of storage capacity for the whole herd
- 73 ha of grassland available for pasture



Map of the second place, plots available for grazing are in red

After the fusion of these two farms, only the first place building was big enough to house the whole herd. The two places are 10 km far.

Detailed description

The solution was to keep the big building of the first place for house the herd during winter and to move the herd in the second place during summer to have enough area for the pasture.

The milking management could be solved with 3 options:

- 2 fix milking parlour, one in each place
- 1 mobile milking parlour
- 2 places for milking but only one mobile equipment (pumps, pipes...)

The investment was almost the same between these 3 options.

The last option was chosen, because of the ease of cleaning a fixed installation relative to a mobile. The disadvantage of the first option was that the equipment would only be used for 6 months a year, which is bad for machine maintenance (seals ...).

Results

Farmers are satisfied of the installation. Equipment is moved twice a year and the pasture area of the second place is enough productive to feed the herd during all the season.

Advantages of the innovation	Disadvantages
Costless milking production during grass season, because of the valorization of the grasslands of the second place	Moving equipment and herd take times
No need to rebuild a new barn and new storage capacity in the second place	Equipment can be broken during moving
Valorization of forces of each places	The cows don't have a food transition : they have gone from 80-100% of conserved forages to 80-100% of grazing in one day

Perspective and threats

The innovation is not challenged by the farmers and seems to be well adapted of the context. The future ways of progress of the farmers is to manage a cattle and sheep combined pasture to limit parasitism and to have a better grass valorization.

Another issue is the accentuation of the heat and drought in summer : that can disturb grazing and make necessary to feed animals during summer with conserved forage, which involve to build new storage capacities in the second place or to moving two more times the equipment and animals.