



Holistic change for brighter mouse-free future



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1 Description of the innovation



Holistic change in order to become more self-sufficient and limit mice damage in grasslands.

Reduced mice damage is a positive side effect of new grassland management. It gets explained by cutting to nothing mineral fertilizers and liming, the late hay mowing, delayed manure spreading after the reproductive phase of grass and harrowing at specific moments to prevent meadows from having a root mat. All of this contributes to the good balance of meadows both qualitative and quantitative. The adoption of the Obsalim method to adapt feeding according to the symptoms and behavior of cows as well as the use of the lunar calendar are some of the practices on which the new farming system is based. This new approach to the profession with more observations has been undertaken to get autonomy on forage, finances and decision-making.



Bottom line



Work conditions

Decrease mice population

NEED TO CHANGE

After 2009 milk crisis, need to change farming system to regain autonomy.

Levers: Training (20 days/year), exchange and experiment with like-minded farmers, drop inputs,

Brakes: first year yield loss, learning and adaptation time, need for motivation and open-mindedness

Success: Better income, pride, more diversity within grassland, decrease in mice population.



2 FARM DESCRIPTION

ENVIRONNEMENT

Soil types: Volcanic, sandy loam

Climate : Humid continental

Altitude : 1000 m

Slope: 5%

GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

Rotational grazing (strip) for 6 to 8 months

MEADOWS

Only hay harvested

1 third late mown (natural reseeding, conservation of grass species with a range of precocity...)

Grass harrows to manage the species-content of meadows (aim to get a cover of 70% grass/30% clover)

Spread liquid manure after reproductive phase of grass

No mineral fertilizer or lime

STRUCTURE

2 Annual Work Unit

Conversion to organic since 2016

Agricultural area : 50 ha

All of it is permanent grassland

Stocking rate: 1,2 UGB/ha

TRIPLE PERFORMANCE

8t DM/ha of hay with 3 cut, quality and diversity improvement of meadows (more than 40 grass species)

40 milking cows

6200-6500 L per cow with 1t of feed

Aim: 7000 L per cow with 800kg of feed

Set up a like-minded farmers association
« Eleveurs autrement »

WHY IS IT WORKING

Many training course to develop new skills and knowledge

Gathering with like-minded farmers to try and experiment new things as well as get reassurance

Holistic approach to change, every new practice has impact on the existing one

Only add practice that follow the statement :

- Improve technical and financial performance
- Improve the farmer's working conditions