



A sustainable and high-performing system on a living soil



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1 Description of the innovation



Frederic Barreau settled in the farm in 1983 with a sheep unit, label broilers and 20 suckler cows (rearing and fattening system). Since 1983, suckler herd has gradually increased to achieve 64 cows. Farmer has also gradually improved the genetics of the Limousin herd.

He has changed crop system by substituting italian ryegrass and maize silage by multispecies grasslands.



First of all, better grasslands have been oversown and since 2008, grasslands are sown under triticale cover crop and he has stopped tillage to enhance soil capacity.

The farmer aims to optimise forage area and make feeding costs decrease. He has adapted his herd management to fit animal needs to seasonal variations in forage supply. He has implemented a grazing management in strip-stocking, cows have a daily grass supply. Compact autumn calving allows a growth of calves based on grazed grass as early as February. During summer when grass production is low, cows are dried-off.

Living soil conservation and grassland yield help to achieve good economic efficiency. Grazing management fits forage quality supply to feed needs.



Economic results

Livestock production

Environment quality: soil

Working conditions

FARMER'S STRATEGY

an intensive, efficient and sustainable management

Adapting herd management to forage supply to achieve good livestock performances and to limit farm inputs.



2 Farm description

ENVIRONMENT

This plain farm is located in western France, in the department of Vendee. The climate is temperate oceanic with a summer drought from June to September. Main sandy soils have a low capability.

GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

Long grazing period : from February to December.

Grazing management type: strip-stocking with a water buried network

Lengthening the grazing season by carrying out standing grass stocks

STRUCTURE

1 Annual work unit

Agricultural Area: 69 ha UAA

Herd: 64 Limousin cows – 130 LU

Forage area :

- 21 ha temporary grasslands
- 39 ha permanent grasslands

Stocking rate: 2,2 LU/ha main forage area

ANIMAL PERFORMANCES:

Average carcass weight: 450 kg fattening bull

430 kg fattening heifer

Calving interval: 387 days

WHY IT IS WORKING

A gradual implementation, step by step, considering work load and good economic results.

A quest of coherence between animal and forage performances

Good practices and rigour in management

Farmer's state of mind: openness and exchanges

Farmer has made soil constraint become strength of the system.