

Natural pasture-based production & product marketing



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1 Description of the innovation



The farm 'Erkiles' is located in Central Est Sardinia (Italy).

The farming system is extensive and almost totally based on farm permanent grass-land resources. The farm is nearly self-sufficient for animal feeding.

The main innovations in the farm concern the products and the marketing.

1. Cheese. Sheep milk is entirely processed into cheese on farm. Several types of cheese are produced using thistle rennet. All products are sold under the brand «Vegetarian quality» that implies the respect of rules in cheese processing, a sheep diet based on natural pastures and taking particular care of animal health.



2. Marketing. The farmer decided to personalize cheese shape, with the use of a self-created mark representing an ancient ship. A second innovation can be found in the internet site of the farm, which is used not only to show products, but also to divulgate the pastoral culture and the farmer's philosophy in producing cheese and managing the flock preserving the environment. Nonetheless, the site allowed the farmer to sell his cheese all over Italy and Europe.



Reason for the innovation

- Increase farmer income
- Find new markets for cheese
- Attract tourists in the farm
- Divulgate the culture of environmental-friendly practices

Increased number of consumers

Higher selling prices

High quality of self-produced cheese

Well-built image of the farm



2 Farm description

ENVIRONMENT

Soil types: sandy rocky soils, several pH values

Climate: Mediterranean climate

Altitude: 450 m a.s.l.

Slope: from 20 up to 70%

GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

Grazing : Yes

Grazing management type: rotational grazing, combined with mowing (1 cut per year)

Length of the grazing season: all year, since during summer sheep eat wild bush species

Forage conservation type: Hay

Fertilisation rate: 0, except for the distribution of manure on 3 ha each year, in plots where cereals will be cultivated

FARM STRUCTURE

Annual Work Unit: 3 full-time workers

Agricultural Area: 260 ha, 180 ha UAA:

- 60 ha, barley and oat (grazed and mowed)

- 120 ha, natural and semi-natural permanent pastures rich in legumes and Mediterranean maquis

Activity: dairy sheep raising (Sarda breed)

Number of heads (LSU): 45

Stocking rate referred to total farm area: 0,25 LSU per hectare

ANIMAL PERFORMANCE

Milk production: 100-138 l per head per year

Meat production: 300 milk lambs per year, slaughtered 28 days after birth (carcass weight: 6-7 kg)

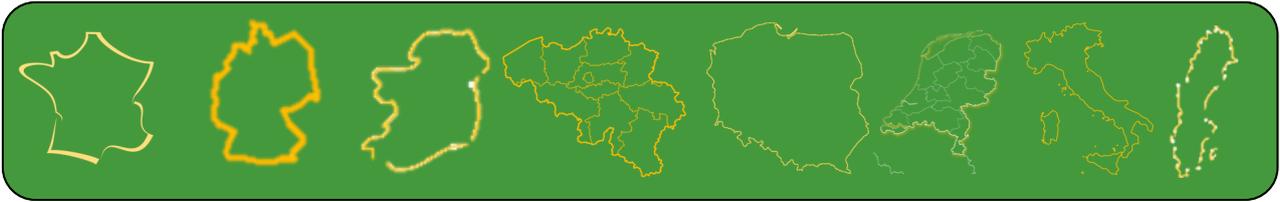
WHY IT IS WORKING

The farmer is strongly motivated to improve the economic conditions of his farm and has a creative mind

The farmer innovated products not only from the qualitative point of view, but also creating a brand for his cheese.

The care devoted to the periodical update of the internet site allows the farmer to attract people to visit it again.

Country shapes



Domains of innovation



Machinery, tools



Forage mixture



Forage conservation technique



Grazing management system



Legume management



Animal feeding management



Animal type (breed)



Product processing



Marketing



Farm system



Landscape

Main types of animal

