Permanent grasslands renovation after intercrops sowing

GAEC de la Basse Cour

1 Description of the innovation

Organic system, grazing system, food system based on hay (dried in barn) and haylage. Priority to grazing with 70 ha available for the cows.

Renovation of permanent grasslands in progress since 2015 with seedling of a catch crop (intercrop) during spring or autumn, that is grazed (5 times) then destroyed to be reseeded as permanent grassland (multiplespecies) the next spring. Composed by Perenial Rye-grass, Tall Fescue, Meadow Fescue, Thimothy grass, Red Clover, Hybrid Clover, White Clover, Chicory and Plantain.

Sowing of multi-species grasslands in 4 stages: destruction of intercrop with a rotavator, 2 cover-crop passages, sowing the grassland with combined sowing then 2 passages of cultipacker roll.

FARMER’S STRATEGY

Technique works quite well for now with good results from milk production (especially when intercrop grazing) and White Clover being present in permanent grassland thanks to spring sowing.

Restrains: climate when sowing, no labour which means good mechanical destruction of the intercrop is needed and cost of the organic seeds.

This technique was setted up to increase production and reduce feeding costs.
STRUCTURE

3 Annual Work Unit

Agricultural area: 200 ha UAA
Main forage area: 175 ha
Permanent grassland: 165 ha
Temporary grasslands: 10 ha

Organic production

Breeds: Prim’Holstein, Montbéliarde and Cross-breeding (Jersiaise x PH)

Stocking rate: 1.08 LU / ha main forage area
137 Dairy cows—190 LU

ANIMAL PERFORMANCES

Milk production per head: 5,000 L/year

WHY IT IS WORKING

The farmers wanted to start a renovation program of permanent grasslands (following a trip to another French area) to improve production.

Great care is given to renovation with intercrop sowing before grassland sowing to clean up the soil keeping good productivity.

Spring sowing of grassland because autumn is too wet

Optimum valorization of multispecies grasslands thanks to the dryer in barn.