



Species-rich leys with good palatability and composition



Patrik Persson, Höglunda

1 Description of the innovation



Species-rich mixtures for silage and grazing

It is important to think about what animals want to eat, rather than simply concentrating on volume. Therefore this farm is developing species-rich leys and testing new species and varieties.

On Höglunda farm there are dairy cows, heifers and ewes. A combination of different species of livestock is important, since they complement each other by grazing in different ways and by reducing parasite loads. Mixing both livestock species and pasture species in leys is particularly positive. Different seed mixtures have been tested. Birdsfoot trefoil, caraway and other drought-tolerant plants must become more common in temporary grassland to cope with dry years such as the past two years.

Having many species in the ley spreads the risks and gives good ground cover: "The best pasture we have is one with a wide range of species. However, it does not always turn out as expected. This needs more research!"



A good, versatile forage is good for farm profits

It is a question of economics and interest

Herbs are important to secure yield when clover suffers. The forage must be of good quality, with acceptably low fibre content. The farm can then use more forage and still get good milk production.



2 Farm description

ENVIRONMENT

Sandy loam.

Temperate continental climate.

Altitude: 80 m a.s.l.

Slope: 0–30 %.

The farm is located in Värmland, central Sweden.

GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

Grazing: Yes.

Temporary grassland: Different seed mixes have been tested: red clover, white clover, alsike clover, birdsfoot trefoil, timothy, meadow fescue, spiced up with different herbs (chicory, caraway, ribwort plantain) and lucerne. Perennial ryegrass is found even though it is not sown.

STRUCTURE

2.5 AWU.

KRAV-certified organic production.

212 ha arable land area, of which 100 ha and 50 ha temporary grassland area for cutting and grazing, respectively.

8 ha semi-natural grassland area.

ANIMAL PERFORMANCE

75 dairy cows (Holstein and Swedish Red) producing around 9,200 kg milk per year.

55 ewes.

WHY IS IT WORKING?

Yields are not high in this area, so it is a question of experimenting and exploiting the natural conditions in the soil in temporary grasslands. Soil structure must be improved and also dry years must give adequate yields. Economics and a desire to try new things are the driving forces.