



 Jörg Schwarting - family farm



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130 hectares



animal management

AMS IN A FULL GRAZING SYSTEM WORKS PERFECTLY WITH SELECTION GATES

The Schwarting dairy farm lies in Northwestern Germany with 130 ha grassland and 150 dairy cows. As a longstanding family-owned farm, they converted to organic production in 2022. The cows have access to fully conjunct pastures surrounding the barn. A concrete path and generally good farm road infrastructure allows moving the cows conveniently and maintaining a rotational grazing system. Each paddock has access to fresh ground water and is provided with mobile troughs for a sufficient water supply for high-lactating cows. To reduce the workload and create a more flexible workflow, they decided to install an automatic milking system (AMS). Initially, there were concerns that full grazing and AMS would not go together, but the installation of selection gates helped to ensure more than two milkings per cow per day despite a full grazing system. The farmer installed the selection gates 100 metres from the barn at the intersection of the paths, thus connecting the two grazing blocks. Instead of feeding concentrates as attractant feed, they motivate the cows by giving them access to fresh grass and thereby ensure sufficient milking performance.

The cows have access to two grazing blocks between which they alternate, depending on the last milking time: after milking, between midnight and 10 a.m., cows have access to the first block. After 10 a.m., cows have access to the second block. Their allocation to the two grazing blocks also depends on the feed requirements and the number of cows. Fresh grass is allocated daily in each grazing block, and after 10 a.m. each cow is given access to a new block.

The farm recently focuses more closely on including clover and herbs in the sward for fixing nitrogen and the productivity being more resilient to increased summer rainfall variability.

Key points:

- Optimisation of the automatic milking system under full pasture with high grass intake and maintenance of high yields
- Introduction of resistant swards with herbs and legumes to diversify the crop

Farmer Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sa9wmENtAFo>



Photo credit: photos generated from farmer interview - Grünlandzentrum Niedersachsen/Bremen