Pianuedras - family farm

Luca and Gianmario Sanna

165 hectares

improvement of grassland management

TREE MANAGEMENT IN AGROSILVOPASTORAL FARMS TO INCREASE PASTURE AVAILABILITY AND PRODUCTIVITY

Agrosilvopastoral systems are characterized by the presence of trees where the understorey forage is grazed by animals throughout the year. The proper design of these systems can improve the availability of forage, provides shade during summer, maintains a high level of biodiversity and promotes the release of ecosystem services, the economic diversification of the farm and the animal welfare. Sometimes the understorey pastures alone are insufficient to sustain an economically viable animal production. An inspirational example of an improved design of these systems can be found on the farm of Gianmario and Luca Sanna, lying in Mediterranean environment. The objective of the farmers is to increase the availability of mixed-use temporary grasslands to complement understorey pastures, and possibly become self-sufficient in hay and grain production. Their decision involved the cleaning of shrubs and the understorey, the thinning and pruning trees, predominantly downy oaks, to lighten and give an upright habitus to the tree crowns, as well as the cultivation of mixed-use pastures, i.e. binary mixtures of ryegrass and clovers , which are used under a rotational management including understorey pastures.

The trees are maintained at the right height, size and density of the tree crown by pruning branches and suckers. The farmers prune downy oak trees after the appearance of leaves, which are palatable for sheep and represent a useful diet integration when pastures begin to dry because of summer drought. Acorns are eaten as well by sheep. The example from the Mediterranean farm demonstrates how a well-planned design of these systems can lead to sustainable management, ensuring both animal welfare and integrated resource exploitation.

Authors: Melis R.A.M., Nieddu D., CNR

Farmer Interview

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2YQuWjoutgg

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