



Bonacossu - family farm



Gian Mario Costaggu



70 hectares



grassland  
management

## COMBINED USE OF RATIONED, ROTATIONAL AND FREE-GRAZING IN BEEF FARMS

Managing grazing to improve pasture productivity and animal intake is a general objective of livestock farms, but it has a special importance for farms where herbage production is limited and biomass is valuable for the production of hay stocks. In the Mediterranean environment, silvopastoral systems are commonly used to raise beef cattle and they are usually low input and low productivity systems. The use of rationed and rotational grazing can improve herbage intake by cattle and grassland composition and quality. This is what is done by the farmer Gian Mario Costaggu on his farm Bonacossu in North-East Sardinia, which features both permanent pastures and annual pastures. To improve pasture utilisation by animals, the farmer adopted rationed grazing management in permanent pastures during the most favourable season (spring).

Electric fences are used to delimit areas of about 3,000 square meters in which animals graze two hours a day for a maximum of three consecutive days to favor the complete grass utilisation. Rotational grazing on small paddocks is used on annual forage crops. In the latter case, paddocks are delimited by wire fences and electric fences. Finally, animals graze freely during summer months and drought periods on stubbles and dry vegetation. Animal rations are integrated with grain-legume seed mixtures accordingly to the animal needs in each season. The effect of this management on animals is to increase their herbage intake and improve weight gain with less biomass waste, which is valuable for haymaking. Moreover, pastures are protected from overgrazing.

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**Farmer Interview**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VweuSuD4lu0>



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