



Skogsgård Anna & Anders Carlsson - family farm



Anna & Anders
Carlsson



4000 hectares



animal management

FOSTER COWS ON SEMI-NATURAL GRASSLANDS

Anna and Anders Carlsson run the farm Skogsgård in Southern Sweden with certified organic dairy production and 220 dairy cows and 20 suckler cows. The area has a lot of available pastures, but there are not enough grazing animals. Semi-natural grasslands and temporary grasslands are not suitable for young animals due to the high level of parasites. Anna and Anders tried to find a way to make use of this land. As the production is certified organic the calves are not fed with powdered milk but with the cow's milk. One year ago, Anna and Anders started to make foster cows out of dairy cows, that for various reasons, didn't fit in the dairy production. They might have low milk yield or udder health problems. They might also be with calf and ready for calving in October. The cows are given 2-3 calves and they are let out on the semi-natural grasslands. This way, calves born in spring can graze on pastures. Anna and Anders see several benefits of this system. The calves adapt gradually to the parasite level when they graze together with the cow and get milk from the cow.

Less work is another great advantage, as the calves don't have to be given milk. This way Anna and Anders can use pastures that otherwise wouldn't be used. The calves learn how to graze, they get used to being outdoor and are not afraid of fences. The animals are easier to manage and they grow well. It's important to find the right cows for the task and to let the animals get used to each other. Some cows are not willing at all and are deselected, while others suit well in the system and are fine with taking care for several calves. Before the cow and the calves are let out to the pastures, they stay a while in a smaller paddock to get used to each other.

Author: Linda af Geijersstam, Svenska Vallföreningen

Farmer Interview

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gaWP_QW9DE

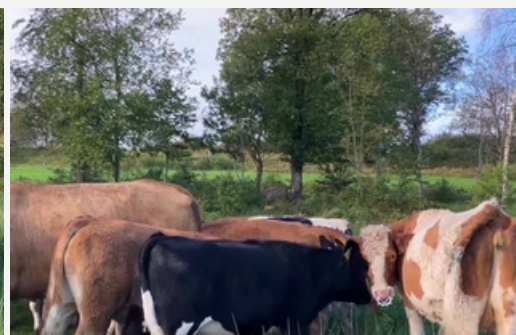


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