

GRAZING4AGROECOLOGY
NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2024



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Welcome to the seventh edition of the Grazing4AgroEcology Newsletter!

In this seventh edition of our newsletter, we bring you a comprehensive overview of key developments and activities within our community. We begin with a recap of the General Assembly Meeting n°5, highlighting the experiences and insights gained by the participants. We also provide updates on the activities of our project members across various regions, showcasing their ongoing efforts and achievements.

The latest innovations within the Partner Farm Network (PFN) are featured, demonstrating how these advancements are transforming farming practices. In our "Country Views" section, we share perspectives and updates from different countries, offering a diverse look at agricultural trends and challenges. Additionally, our partner publishers contribute with valuable insights, further enriching this edition.

We invite you to delve into these updates to better understand the impact of these developments on the agricultural sector.

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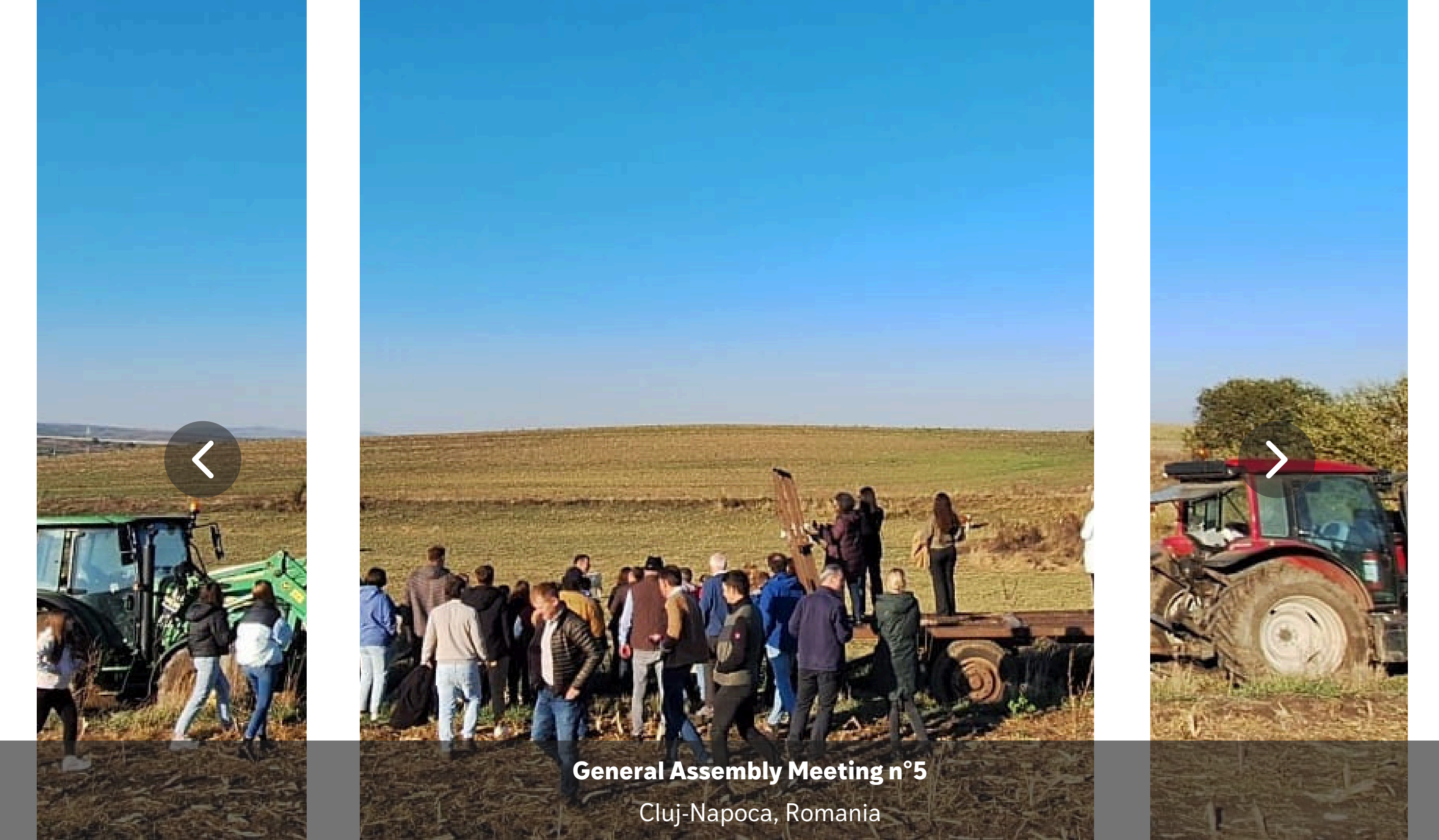
**Europe Grazing4AgroEcology**

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General Assembly Meeting n°5
Cluj-Napoca, Romania



5.0 Rating
For more information click [here](#).

The 5th General Partner Assembly Meeting of the Grazing4AgroEcology project served as a pivotal gathering to assess progress, exchange ideas, and set future goals for promoting sustainable grazing practices across Europe. Hosted in Romania, the event provided a platform for collaboration among international experts, farmers, and stakeholders.

Event highlights

- The 5th General Partner Assembly Meeting of the Grazing4AgroEcology project took place in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, from October 22-24, 2024. Hosted by USAMV Cluj-Napoca and the Poarta Apusenilor Guesthouse, the meeting gathered international experts, researchers, farmers, and stakeholders to review progress, share knowledge, and plan upcoming activities.
- Highlights included a field visit to a local partner farm in Turda, where participants engaged in interactive sessions and exchanged insights on sustainable grazing practices. Key discussions revolved around enhancing grazing-based farming systems, effective dissemination strategies, and preparations for the European Label Conference in Berlin (2025).
- The event fostered collaboration across EU projects, strengthening synergies among members and reinforcing the commitment to advancing agroecological grazing practices in Europe.

More Images





Ireland



Signpost Conference 2024

Teagasc Signpost Conference and General Assembly



The Teagasc Signpost Programme’s annual conference, held on November 21 in Clonmel, highlighted significant progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and promoting climate resilience. Irish farmers achieved a 4.6% emissions reduction in 2023 through measures like reduced nitrogen fertilizer use, increased adoption of protected urea, and Low Emission Slurry Spreading technology. The Signpost Farms initiative reported a 21% reduction in chemical nitrogen use, with 67% of nitrogen applied as protected urea, far above the national average of 27%. Climate data from Met Éireann emphasized the importance of infrastructure improvements and forage quality to address Ireland’s warming and wetter trends.



Young Farmers Tour to Ireland 2025

From April 28-30, 2025, the Young Farmers Tour will explore sustainable grazing practices in Ireland. Highlights include visits to Teagasc research centers and sustainable dairy farms, with a focus on clover systems, methane reduction, and biodiversity. Social events in Cork City and the Grazing4AgroEcology International Awards are also planned. Registration closes on February 28, 2025. For more information click [here](#).



France



Nicolas FLOC's Dairy Farm Open Day

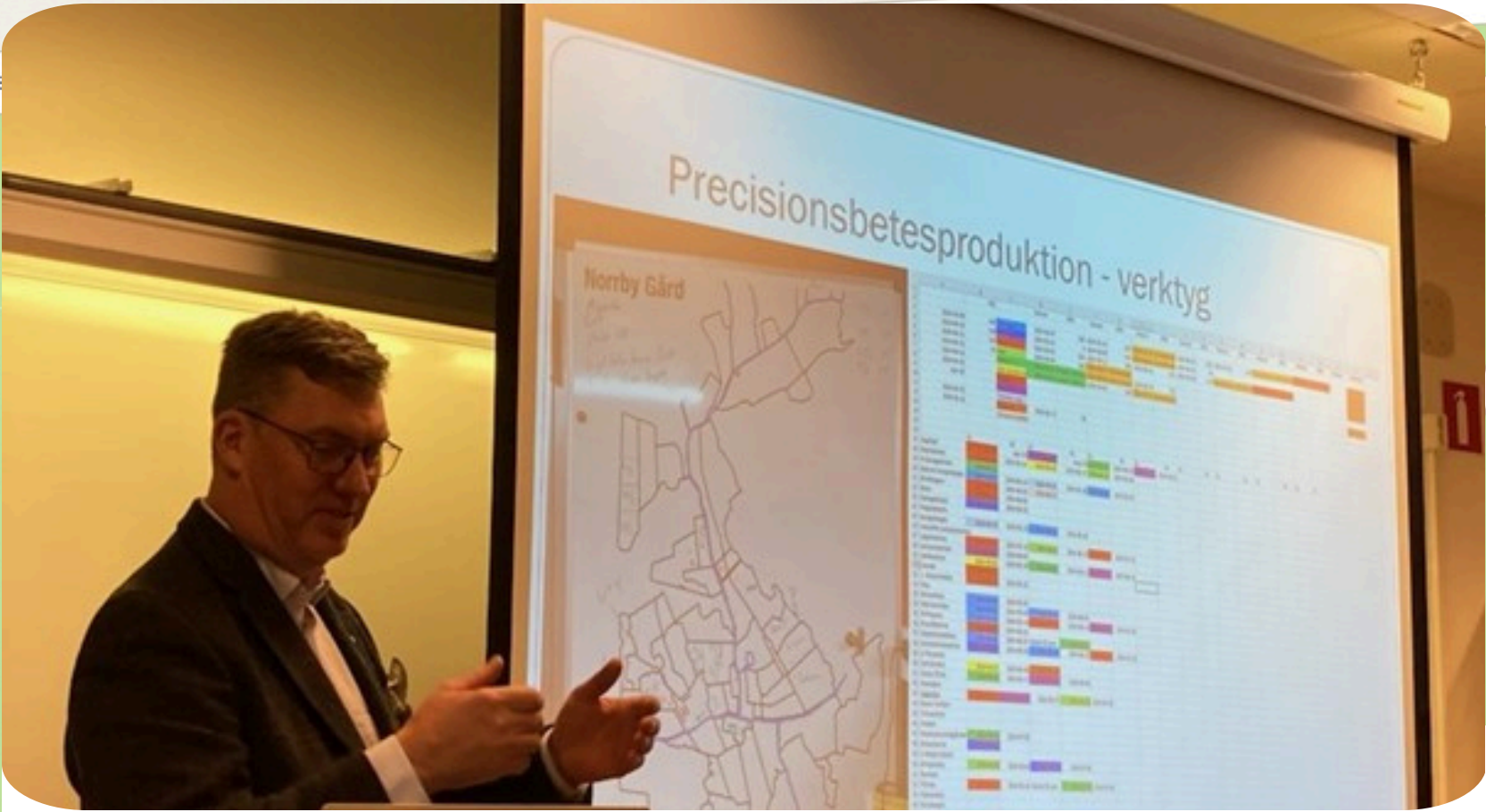


On June 20, Nicolas FLOC hosted an open day at his 61-hectare dairy farm in Guipel, producing 350,000 liters of milk annually with 50 Pie Rouge cows. The event focused on maximizing grazing on limited accessible land (40 ares per cow), managing spring silage, and implementing technical innovations. Workshops addressed pasture management, grassland sown under cereal/protein mixture crops, and improving milking ergonomics using specialized equipment such as teat sprayers and exoskeletons. With 70 attendees, the event showcased practical solutions to enhance efficiency and comfort in dairy farming.



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Precision Grazing and Young Farmers’ Tour Highlights

At the Swedish Grassland Society's annual meeting in November 2024, Tomas Olsson of Norrby Farm shared insights on efficient grazing management in lamb production. His 180-hectare farm prioritises measuring pasture growth, grazing rotation, and paddock regrowth, alongside breed selection, parasite control, and fertilization. The meeting also included a report from the Young Farmers Tour in the Netherlands. Marlene Lindenthal, a crop adviser, shared experiences from farm walks, workshops, and presentations. Sweden had 14 participants, highlighting strong engagement in sustainable farming.

Grazing Award Winners Honored at Elmia Agriculture
Anna and Anders Carlsson of Skogsgård farm won Sweden’s first Grazing Award at the Elmia Agriculture fair in October 2024. They were praised for their efficient grazing strategy, adapted breeds, and role as inspiring ambassadors for sustainable farming.



BioSilvania Event

On December 6, 2024, an AKIS meeting and Farm Walk at BioSilvania Organic Farm, Crişeni, Sălaj County, brought together farmers, researchers, and stakeholders to discuss sustainable grazing and organic farming practices. Organized by USAMV Cluj-Napoca and AgroTransilvania Cluster as part of the G4AE project, the event highlighted partnerships with retailers, consumer education on organic benefits, and the need for transparency in pricing. Discussions covered manure management techniques like composting to handle 22 tons of daily waste and water access challenges on pastures. The event emphasized knowledge exchange, practical sustainability solutions, and transparent communication, supporting G4AE’s goals in promoting agroecological practices in Romania.





Sustainable PARasite Control in Grazing Ruminants

Sustainable Parasite Control in Grazing Ruminants – SPARC Project

Our Dutch partner ZLTO plays a key role in the SPARC project, promoting sustainable parasite control measures for grazing ruminants. European stakeholders actively participated in the project meeting in Cordoba, Spain, where SPARC ambassadors, including farmers and veterinarians, shared practical insights and innovative solutions like targeted treatments and pasture management. These efforts are tested on pilot farms to improve animal health, sustainability, and profitability. Learn more at <https://wormsparc.com/>.

Dutch G4AE Farm Walk

During the Dutch G4AE farm walk Pedro Janssen from Louis Bolk Institute took us through the management of herb-rich grasslands. Then, G4AE Farmer Johnny van der Zanden introduced his dairy farm, followed by an interesting discussion on options how to improve grass intake via optimal infrastructure (roadways, size of paddocks, etc.)



Joint meeting among projects and international stakeholders



On September 27, 2024, a joint meeting was held with the GRAZING4AGROECOLOGY, PASTINNOVA, and PASCHINRES projects at the G4AE Partner Farm Monteforte, which also leads the PASCHINRES Operational Group. Organized by partners from Croatia (AZRRI), France (INRAE and Regional Chamber of Agriculture in Corsica), Greece (ELGO), and Greek business stakeholders from PASTINNOVA, the event facilitated collaboration within the West Mediterranean Regional Living Lab, supported by CNR-ISPAAAM and APPIA Pastoral Network. The meeting showcased project activities, discussed shared goals, and explored innovations, grazing-based product valorization, and business models for small livestock farms. Participants expressed strong interest in the upcoming G4AE Conference on labelling, scheduled for Berlin in 2025, as a key opportunity to further these initiatives.



Portugal



CONSULAI Promotes Agroecology and effective communication in Lisbon

On September 24, 2024, a Partner Farm Network meeting was held at Herdade da Carneira, Alentejo, to share best practices for managing the Montado system. Participants observed tree marking for sick trees, a practice to optimize resources for healthier growth, and received insights from the Forestry Producers Association on improving Montado productivity. An expert highlighted Montado’s carbon capture potential, positioning it as a valuable asset in carbon trading markets. Lusosem provided recommendations for forage production, including seed mixtures tailored to local conditions and farmer needs. The event concluded with interactive sessions led by CONSULAI, Lusosem, and the Forestry Producers Association, where participants explored practical applications, benefits, and challenges. A total of 15 participants, including 10 farmers and 5 advisors, attended the meeting.

SOIL CORRECTIONS

- Soil analysis – allows to improve knowledge about our soils
- Organic matter – increases fertility and controls pH
- Liming – nutrient availability

MONTADO MANAGEMENT

- Decrease in tree density – solar exposition, aeration, increase the Montado health. Challenge – take down trees regularly
- Management of the Montado’s phytosanitation – minimum tillage, less tree felling, greater productivity. Challenges: pH corrections, soil analysis, investment
- Increasing the tree density – reduction of livestock, reduction of costs. Challenges: less control over the montado health

FORAGE MANAGEMENT

- Increase productivity, quality and area of forage production – more animal feed which leads to more animals and more profitability. Challenge: good soil management
- Choosing the best species – soil improvements, adequate species to the respective animals and soil. Challenges: installation, livestock management
- Forage storage – helps on the draught periods, cost reduction. Challenges: storage capacity, capital tie-up

Germany



Schwarting Dairy Farm

Located in Northwestern Germany, the Schwarting dairy farm spans 130 hectares of grassland and houses 150 dairy cows. Since transitioning to organic production in 2022, the farm has implemented rotational grazing with well-maintained paths and fresh water access for high-lactating cows.

To optimize efficiency, the farm introduced an automatic milking system (AMS) with selection gates, ensuring over two milkings per cow daily, even in a full grazing setup. Cows alternate between two grazing blocks based on milking times, with fresh grass allocated daily.

The farm also focuses on diversifying swards with clover and herbs to improve nitrogen fixation and increase resilience to variable summer rainfall.



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Germany: Visit to Schleswig-Holstein

From November 5-6, 2024, the Grünlandzentrum Niedersachsen/Bremen, young farmers, and Göttingen University students visited Schleswig-Holstein to explore innovative practices in agroforestry, grazing systems, and techno-grazing. Key visits included Trenthorst Experimental Farm, showcasing agroforestry, drought resilience trials, and cow management experiments, and Gut Rothenhausen, a Demeter-certified farm using techno-grazing. At Grünhof, Jörg Riecken demonstrated automated milking, rotational grazing, and block calving. The Lindhof Experimental Farm highlighted an organic grazing system with crossbred Jersey cattle and species-rich pastures for cost-efficient milk production. [Link to full text.](#)

Portugal: Herdade da Carneira

Herdade da Carneira, located on the northern slopes of Serra d'Ossa in southern Portugal, spans 180 hectares, including eucalyptus groves, arable land, cork oak forest, and a newly planted 7-hectare super high-density olive grove. The farm benefits from two large water basins, ensuring ample irrigation for fodder crops and the olive grove. In line with climate change mitigation, the farm has focused on reducing cork oak density, conducting phytosanitary assessments, and improving meadows with clover and grass mixtures. These practices enhance soil health and support the sustainability of the Montado mixed farming system.





Italy: Pasture Management at Bonacossu Farm, Sardinia

At Bonacossu farm in North-East Sardinia, farmer Gian Mario Costaggiu optimises grazing with ration and rotational methods on semi-natural and annual pastures. In spring, ration grazing uses electric fences to maximize herbage intake, while rotational grazing is applied to forage crops. During summer and droughts, cattle graze freely on stubbles and Mediterranean maquis. These practices boost weight gain, reduce waste, and protect pastures from overgrazing, enhancing productivity and haymaking efficiency.



Ireland: Teagasc National Dairy Conference

The Teagasc National Dairy Conference on November 27, 2024, brought together farmers, researchers, and advisors to address dairy sector challenges and opportunities. John McNamara, a Partner Farm Network farmer, emphasized efficient nutrient management to boost productivity, reduce costs, and support sustainability through precise fertilizer use and organic manures. Teagasc Director, Professor Frank O'Mara, highlighted a 4.6% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in 2023, with further declines expected in 2024 due to reduced chemical nitrogen use and adoption of protected urea. Research on clover and multi-species swards was presented as a way to reduce nitrogen needs without lowering productivity. Dr. Áine Murray underscored the value of grazed grass and balancing stocking rates with pasture growth, while Dr. Patrick Forrestal and Professor Pat Dillon addressed emissions reduction and water quality improvements through efficient slurry management and tailored solutions.





Romania: BioSilvania Farm

BioSilvania Farm exemplifies sustainable and profitable organic farming through its Short Integrated Agri-food Chain, minimizing the distance between production, processing, and distribution to under 30 km. This approach reduces transportation emissions, ensures fresher products, and enhances environmental sustainability. Spanning 2,200 hectares of organic crops and supporting 2,000 cows, the farm seamlessly integrates livestock and crop production, reducing waste and optimizing costs. By adding value through direct sales and specialized intermediaries, BioSilvania ensures traceability and quality from "farm to fork." The farm also emphasises consumer education, promoting awareness of organic benefits and fostering trust and transparency in the food supply chain. This model enhances food system resilience by reducing reliance on complex supply chains, offering a replicable blueprint for other regions aiming to achieve efficiency, quality, and sustainability in organic farming.



France: Rearing Calves with Grazing Nurse Cows

Since transitioning to organic dairy farming in 2018, Thibault has implemented a grass-fed system focused on simplifying work and improving calf rearing. By 2020, he adopted once-a-day milking for his 60 Jersey cows and grouped calving in the spring. This led to rearing 45 calves with 15 nurse cows through rotational grazing, which has significantly improved calf health and reduced feeding costs. The system offers multiple benefits: fewer health issues, faster calf fattening, grazing heifers, reduced workload, and better comfort. Economically, the impact is minimal as organic calves already rely on whole milk, and nursing cows return to milking after calves are weaned or sent to slaughter. Thibault emphasises the importance of introducing calves to grazing early in the spring.





Sweden: Field Walk at Berghult

In August, Gunnar Danielsson shared insights on his organic lamb farm in Berghult, Kosta, a Partner Farm. Gunnar uses high-clover seed mixtures with moderate nitrogen fertilization and includes species like plantain, chicory, and caraway for enhanced grazing. He supplements with potassium and sulphur for winter persistency, using approved mineral fertilizers for organic farming. Lambing in mid-June aligns with optimal grazing and parasite control, while rotational grazing on post-harvest leys ensures consistent feed. Gunnar’s grazing strategy includes harvesting leys once, followed by grazing them 6-7 times, promoting lamb growth with autumn grass quality comparable to concentrate feed. This approach ensures sustainable pasture and livestock management.





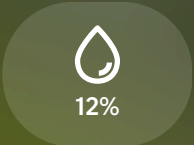
Country views

Italy

Summer 2024 saw extreme heat and drought in Italy, with Sardinia producing good irrigated forage yields but facing a severe Blue Tongue outbreak. Over 3,900 cases led to 61,000 sheep deaths and a 30-50% drop in milk production. September rain improved grazing and forage sowing.



Blue Tongue outbreaks in Italy, 2024. Red-active; Grey- resolved.



Germany

The milk price in Germany is currently experiencing a welcome upswing, providing much-needed financial relief for dairy farmers. This favorable trend is supported by strong demand, both domestically and internationally, as well as a more balanced supply chain, which together have contributed to stabilizing prices.



Sweden

The autumn in Sweden was mild or very mild in the whole country with very high temperatures in the beginning of September. The mild weather together with few rainy days led to good yields and a long harvest season.



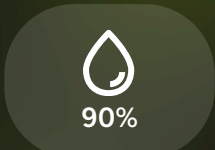
Ireland

Irish farmers are focused on autumn grazing management, aiming for a closing cover of 700kg/DM/Ha to ensure early spring growth, reduce winter feed costs, and maintain sustainable, productive pastures. As winter sets in, cattle are being housed, and dairy cows are dried off to prepare for the next lactation cycle, essential for udder health and energy replenishment.



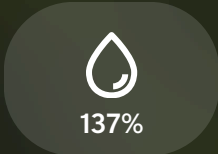
France

Persistent rain in 2024 caused grazing and harvest delays, affecting pasture and maize yields. Silage is bulkier and less nutritious, requiring concentrate supplementation to maintain production and reproduction. Detailed reports are available from the Institut de l'Elevage. For more details, refer to the [Institut de l'Elevage's](#) monthly reports.



Portugal

The last few months have been characterized by major temperature fluctuations, with an extremely hot August, followed by the 4th coldest September since 2000, and then a big rise in temperature again in October, with several records of extreme temperatures. Although August was extremely dry, October already saw 137% more rainfall than average, which contributed to an increase in the percentage of water in the soil.



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Germany
Land & Forst



At February's Grassland Day in Rodenkirchen, Dr. Tammo Peters emphasized grazing's benefits, including better animal health, milk quality, and lower costs. However, these advantages depend on optimal management, including proper pasture composition, nutrient fertilization, and grazing practices. For more details, visit the article [here](#).



Like



Reply



Repost



France
Web-agri



After the Young Farmers Tour in spring 2024, the French journal Web-Agri produced a list of documentaries about farming in the Netherlands. Watch the testimonials of the farmers we met during the YFT. They talk about their management of grazing, fertilisation and land prices. Some of the farmers speak English and can therefore be viewed by an international audience [here](#).



Likes



Reply



Repost



Ireland



Labels in Ireland detail product origin, ingredients, production methods, and certifications, promoting transparency and consumer trust. They help farmers access premium markets, command higher prices, and differentiate products by highlighting unique or sustainable practices. Labels emphasizing sustainability and animal welfare appeal to ethical consumer demands while ensuring legal compliance, especially for exports. Overall, they enhance product value and expand market opportunities.



Likes



Reply



Repost



PARTNERS







PARTNERS













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