



 Bartels GbR - family farm



Claas Bartels



187 hectares



breeding advance

## OPTIMISED GRAZING GENETICS: THREE-BREED CROSS FOR MORE ROBUSTNESS, MILK YIELD AND MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

In Northwestern Germany, the family-run Bartels farm manages almost 190 ha of arable and grassland with around 200 dairy cows on a rather sandy soil. Initial challenge of the farm was old building infrastructure which could no longer accommodate large high-performing breeds. Since they did not want to compromise their production level, simply introducing a smaller breed was not an attractive option. Also, they have been running an intensive short sward grazing system on their pastures which requires good animal mobility and road quality.

A three-breed crossbreeding system was introduced to cater for these requirements, with each breed bringing along a desired trait: Holstein-Friesian was the initial breed and still remains as the carrier of high milk yield. They are then crossed with Swedish Red-and-White for better hoof health, mobility, fertility and milk components.

The third in the rotational breeding was chosen to be the dual-purpose breed Montbéliard for its milk components, as well as for better sales revenue for the male weaners.

Since the initiation of crossbreeding in the year 2000, they have been observing additional benefits such as very good calf health and low calf mortality. Improved overall fertility facilitates easy block calvings in the winter months from November to February.

Reaping the benefits of their herd's genetics, they also managed to optimise pasture utilisation and have their grasslands grazed as efficiently as possible by running a short sward grazing system.

Further adjustments are planned to optimise animal health and production including the provision of water pipes to each paddock and the further improvement of road quality.

### Farmer Interview

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hZQkgCmAL6k>

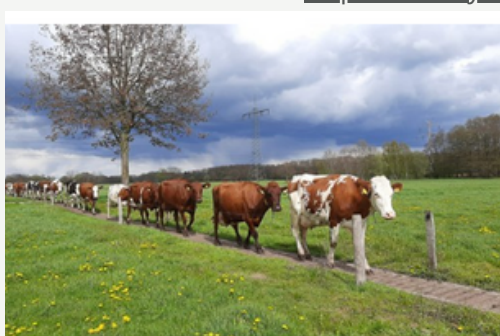


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