

**Grazing4AgroEcology
NEWSLETTER**

DECEMBER 2025

No.11



**Funded by
the European Union**

This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101059626.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

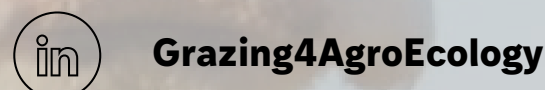
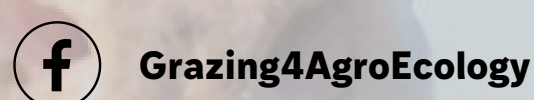
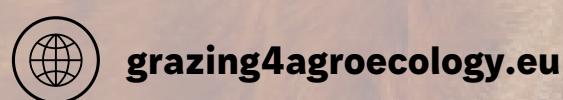
Welcome to the 11th Grazing4AgroEcology Newsletter!

In this edition, we bring you insights from the 7th General Partner Assembly in Sweden, where farmers, advisors, researchers and project partners from across Europe gathered to explore grazing systems, discuss wildlife coexistence, and advance the final phase of the Grazing4AgroEcology project.

You'll also find country updates from our project partners, showing how local conditions, climate, and policies are influencing grassland farming. The Partner Farm Network (PFN) shares new examples of practical solutions for low-input farming, biodiversity, and the smart use of technology in grazing systems.

Our Country Views section includes national perspectives from different regions, offering a clearer picture of current trends and challenges in pasture-based agriculture. These updates are complemented by contributions from partner publishers, who help tell the farmers' stories in meaningful and engaging ways.

We invite you to explore this edition and discover how grazing-based farming continues to evolve across Europe—towards more resilient, sustainable, and farmer-driven systems.



A scenic mountain landscape with a brown and white cow in the foreground. The cow is standing in a lush green field, looking towards the right. In the background, there are steep, rocky mountains under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. A dirt path winds through the field.

IN THIS EDITION...

- 1 7th G4AE General Partner Assembly
- 2 Country updates
- 4 Innovation and Partner Farm Network (PFN)
- 7 Partner Publisher updates
- 8 Country views



Funded by
the European Union

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101059626.
Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



5.0 Rating

In October 2025, partners from the Grazing4AgroEcology project met in Kalmar and on the island of Öland, Sweden, for the 7th General Partner Assembly (GPA). Hosted by our Swedish colleagues, the gathering brought together researchers, advisors, farmers and students from across Europe. The programme combined a public conference, a Carousel of Experts, farm visits and internal project sessions, offering a rich platform for exchange and collaboration in a landscape shaped by grasslands, coastal pastures and long farming traditions.

Event highlights

- At Linnaeus University, participants explored the challenge of maintaining sustainable grazing systems amid rising wolf and bear presence. Farmers from Sweden, Italy and Romania shared concrete experiences with predation. Experts presented data on carnivore trends, the limits of protection measures, and the role of zoning, social norms and subsidies in shaping practical coexistence.
- On Öland, a Carousel of Experts and farm visits showcased Swedish grazing systems and the impact of wildlife on grassland management. Participants exchanged ideas on adaptation strategies and discussed solutions directly in the field.
- At Station Linné, partners reviewed progress across work packages, refined the use of project tools such as the self-assessment and AKIS meetings, and planned the final project phase. The gathering strengthened collaboration and created space for valuable informal exchanges.

- Speakers from Sweden, Germany and Poland shared European-wide perspectives on coexistence with wolves and bears. Key takeaways included:
- protective measures can reduce, but not eliminate, livestock losses;
 - zoning and targeted regulation can help stabilize conflict areas;
 - farmer uptake of fencing and deterrents depends strongly on social norms and financial support;
 - compensation schemes and clear, consistent legislation remain essential;
 - coexistence is only possible through integrated ecological, economic and social strategies, with strong backing for farmers who bear the highest burden.

- The GPA in Sweden highlighted how countries face similar challenges in grazing landscapes, whether from wildlife pressure, climate variability or management constraints. The gathering reinforced cooperation across the G4AE partnership and helped shape the project’s roadmap for its final implementation phase.





Last Partner Farm Meeting – François Pinot’s Farm, Côtes-d’Armor



On 2 December, the final meeting of the French farmer group in the Grazing4Agroecology project took place, focusing on insights from Ireland, Sweden and Sardinia. Farmers who joined the Young Farmers Tour in Ireland noted the efficiency of Irish grazing-based dairy systems but questioned how “low-input” they really are, given their reliance on mineral nitrogen and concentrates. Experiences from Sweden and Sardinia highlighted how producers there operate under much harsher environmental constraints — from severe cold to extreme heat and limited rainfall — prompting the group to reflect on their own conditions.

In the afternoon, participants visited the farm of François Pinot and Hélène Barbu in Côtes-d’Armor. Their 87-cow Prim’Holstein herd produces around 8,500 L per cow annually. Although maize silage is available year-round to stabilise the ration, cows graze whenever possible to bring nitrogen into the diet. Each cow has access to 0.35 ha of grazing, helping reduce nitrogen supplementation to 500 kg per cow per year. The farmers are also developing multi-species swards with perennial ryegrass, tall fescue and white clover to prolong the grazing season. On the day of the visit, pastures were still performing well, allowing cows to remain outdoors.



International AKIS Meeting – Sassari



The International AKIS meeting took place in Sassari on 13 November 2025, hosted by CNR and attended by IDELE, Laimburg, Bioland and local stakeholders. The discussion centred on the feasibility of creating a regional or national grazing label to better identify grazing-based products.

Participants reviewed Sardinia’s livestock context and examined four labelling models previously presented at the G4AE conference in Berlin. Key points included criteria for joining such a label, expected farmer remuneration and market reactions. Some emphasised that a grazing label should mainly protect existing production methods, noting differences between meat and milk supply chains. It was reported that a small group of beef farmers had already attempted to introduce a label, though results are not yet known. The meeting also stressed that not all pasture types should qualify, as research shows higher-quality products come from semi-natural pastures. Even without a dedicated label, clearer information on production methods was considered essential.

Debate continued over whether a holistic or rule-based model would be more appropriate. The organic approach was noted as unsuccessful in Italy’s livestock sector due to high certification costs and limited price premiums. Policy constraints were also highlighted, as current measures favour more intensive systems over permanent pastures. A proposed solution was to reward grazing farms for the broader social and environmental benefits they provide.





Ireland



Grassland Masterclass for Young Farmers



A group of young farmers attended the Grassland Masterclass at Teagasc Moorepark, Fermoy, on 7 November, focusing on practical grassland management and planning for the season ahead. The session reviewed key autumn targets, reminding participants that over 70% of the farm should be closed by early November, with an average farm cover of 600–800 kg DM/ha and at least 700 kg DM/ha by 1 December.

The importance of solid grass and fodder budgeting for spring was emphasised, as low opening covers can quickly limit grass availability and extend housing periods. Young farmers were encouraged to act now to increase farm cover and secure early-spring grazing.

The event also showcased how PastureBase Ireland (PBI) supports better decisions by enabling fodder budgeting, fertiliser planning, result uploads and farm mapping. Farmers were encouraged to manage grass effectively, enter weekly covers, use rotation planners and record nutrient applications to strengthen grass utilisation and overall farm performance for the year ahead.



Sweden



Lamb Production on Restored High-Biodiversity Pasture



On 9 October, a field walk was held at the farm of G4AE Partner Farmer Linda af Geijersstam in Torslunda, southern Sweden. Linda presented a restored pasture that had been cleared of shrubs and trees and is now grazed from May to October by sheep of the heritage breed Helsingefår. The lamb meat is sold directly to customers.

Dr. Dave Karlsson, entomologist and manager of Research Station Linné, explained that this pasture is exceptionally species-rich—so much so that researchers call it “the Diversity Meadow.” Grazing is essential to maintaining this high biodiversity. The pasture is also part of a cultural landscape containing Iron Age archaeological remains. A hiking trail runs through the site, complemented by an information panel that helps visitors understand the area’s ecological value.



Germany



Agritechnica 2025 Highlights



At AGRITECHNICA 2025, more than 2,800 exhibitors from 52 countries showcased the newest advances in agricultural technology — from smart mowing systems and efficient forage wagons to drone monitoring and precision-farming tools. The fair attracted around 476,000 visitors from 171 countries. Many grass-based dairy and forage farmers focused on innovations that improve feed efficiency and reduce greenhouse-gas emissions, both essential for climate-resilient pasture systems. The event highlighted how modern machinery and digital solutions are increasingly central to combining productivity with sustainability on European farms.





France: Sowing Multi-Species Grasslands for Animal Needs and Climate Resilience

François Pinot and his partner manage an 85-cow dairy herd in northern Brittany, farming 91 ha, including 37 ha of grassland. The herd produces around 573,000 litres of milk per year, with each cow averaging 9,000 litres and consuming about 1,000 kg of concentrates. Grazing access is generous, at roughly 0.40 ha per cow. For the past four years, the cows have grazed multi-species swards composed of perennial ryegrass, white clover, hybrid ryegrass and tall fescue, complemented by species such as red clover, timothy or birdsfoot trefoil. The aim is to create mixtures that align with production goals: high-yielding, homogeneous swards with strong nutritional value throughout the year, supported by a high share of legumes. The mixes are also designed to perform under both wet conditions and drought, ensuring grass availability across seasons. This approach comes with challenges: higher seed costs due to dense sowing rates, and the difficulty of maintaining long-term balance between species, keeping legumes dominant and preventing weed encroachment. Before establishing multi-species grasslands, François emphasises the need to clearly define the intended use of the pasture and carefully select each species and variety—ideally buying seeds individually and creating tailored mixes.



Romania: Integrating Agriculture, Agritourism and Cooperative Membership for Sustainable Development

In Păglișa, Cluj County, farmer Mihai Horvath manages 100 hectares, including 40 ha of arable land and 60 ha of permanent pasture where he raises 40 dairy cows. While his core business is crop and livestock farming, Mihai has built a diversified model that strengthens both his farm and the wider community. Through his agritourism guesthouse Pensiunea Rafila, he offers visitors an authentic rural experience—from traditional meals prepared with farm produce to participation in daily agricultural activities. Horse-riding trails add another attraction, helping connect tourists with the landscape in an active way. Mihai is also a member of the Someș–Arieș Cooperative, which provides stability for milk sales, access to larger markets and lower input costs through collective purchasing. Each year, he invests in restoring abandoned pastures by clearing woody vegetation (around 3 ha annually), allowing these areas to be used for grazing young cattle during summer. By combining farming, agritourism and cooperative membership, Mihai Horvath demonstrates how diversified activities can support economic resilience, community development and sustainable land management—an inspiring PFN example of tradition strengthened through innovation.





Italy: Meeting at Schnagererhof

The latest Partner Farm Meeting was hosted at Schnagererhof, the farm of Andreas Stockner in South Tyrol, where participants received an update on recent G4AE outputs and project progress. Andreas reported a strong grazing season, using a rotational system from March with 10 paddocks and short two-day pre-grazing periods, before moving to full grazing and monitoring growth with the Grasshopper®. During the farm walk, attendees saw how the Stockner family has refined a pasture-focused system that improves labour and feed efficiency. Their approach—full grazing, short swards and seasonal spring calving—supports grass-based milk production with very limited machinery use. The system also offers lifestyle advantages, as seasonal calving provides an 8–12-week winter break from milking. In the feedback session, farmers emphasised the value of sharing experiences, visiting diverse farms and building stronger networks around grazing practices—especially meaningful in a region where grazing is not the dominant system.



Sweden: Young Farmers Meeting in Skara

In mid-November, sixteen dairy science students from Aeres University in Dronten (the Netherlands) visited Sweden as part of a study tour, during which they explored five dairy farms—four run by Dutch-origin farmers. They also spent a full day at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) campus in Skara, where they toured research facilities for beef and lamb production and attended presentations on current research. Over lunch, they met Swedish animal science students, giving both groups the chance to compare national approaches to grazing. Discussions focused on the differences between Sweden’s compulsory grazing requirement (soon supported by a payment) and the Dutch system, where farmers receive a premium for milk from grazing cows. The students weighed the strengths and weaknesses of legislative versus market-driven approaches. They also compared management of temporary grasslands in both countries, including sward composition, lifespan, fertilisation, stocking rates and recommended rotation and grazing heights.



Sweden: Making Semi-Natural Grasslands More Productive

On 7 October, a “Carousel of Experts” concluded the Conflicting Goals Conference in southern Sweden, addressing increasing conflicts between agriculture and large bird populations on Öland. Four invited speakers, agricultural students and G4AE participants discussed regional challenges caused by geese and cranes, along with prevention measures, before joining a farm walk at a PFN farm.

At Åke Johansson’s farm in Färjestaden, participants saw how he has adapted to goose pressure by changing crops — geese previously grazed down his ley fields, so maize is now grown there, and lucerne is less affected. Matilda Johansson reported both geese and cranes on her family’s dairy farm and noted concerns about tick-borne diseases spreading northward. Farmer Oskar Wiström demonstrated deterrence tools, from flares to a high-powered laser pointer used to disperse flocks.

Robert Briland from the County Administrative Board explained that bird-related damage has increased over the last 25 years due to larger bird populations, greener fields for longer periods and shifting migration patterns linked to climate change.



Ireland: Teagasc National Dairy Conference

The Teagasc National Dairy Conference took place on 26 November 2025 and gathered PFN members, researchers, advisors, consultants and dairy farmers from across Ireland under the theme “Pathways to Progress.” Discussions focused on market pressures and on-farm strategies to strengthen resilience. Dairy Market Analyst Chris Walkland noted ongoing global challenges and warned that 2026 is likely to remain difficult for milk prices due to high supply, with recovery expected only towards late summer.

Speakers emphasised the need for tighter cost control at farm level. Joe Patton highlighted that the cost of production per kg of milk solids has increased by more than 43% since 2020, driven largely by higher concentrate use, while reaffirming that grass utilised continues to be the strongest driver of profitability. He encouraged farmers to align stocking rate with grass growth potential.

Donagh Berry reflected on 25 years of progress with the Economic Breeding Index, noting that a €191 increase in national herd EBI has delivered an estimated €5.46 billion benefit to the dairy sector. He stressed the long-term impact of breeding decisions and the challenge of ensuring today’s AI bulls carry the right genetics to future-proof the industry.

The conference also addressed the sector’s responsibility in protecting water quality, outlining practical on-farm actions to reduce nutrient losses and improve environmental outcomes. There was notable interest in succession and collaborative farming, with farmers sharing experiences of joint arrangements that allowed older farmers to step back while remaining involved. Overall, the event provided clear direction for PFN members seeking to navigate current pressures and build more resilient farm systems.



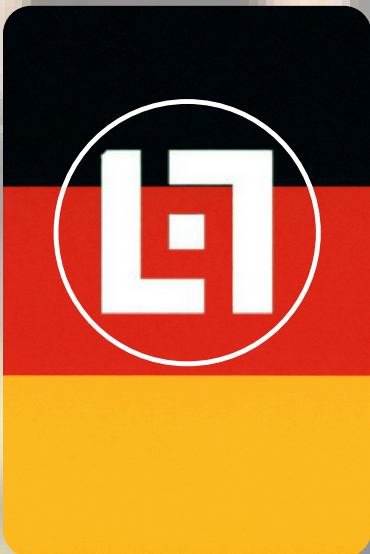


The Netherlands: Final Farm Walk

The final farm walk in the Netherlands was held at BuitenEten in Someren, hosted by Wendy Adriaans. Wendy manages a recreational farm built around a distinctive breed — Texas Longhorns — and focuses on maintaining a natural, low-intervention system. Alongside cattle, she offers visitors activities such as campfire cooking and tours in vintage vehicles, all in a classic cowboy atmosphere. This event marked the conclusion of our three-season Grazing4AgroEcology journey. The study group wrapped up the day over an extended lunch with freshly stone-baked pizzas and an inspiring talk by Bert Philipsen from Wageningen University, who underlined the value of the measures adopted by farmers throughout the project to build resilient, grass-based systems that work with nature rather than against it.



Partner Publisher Updates



France



Yoann Quiniou’s Farm: “Starting a 100% Grass-Fed Dairy Farm, My Triple Win”

Web-agri highlights the story of Yoann Quiniou, a young dairy farmer who, in 2023, established a fully grass-fed system in Orne (Normandy). His farm operates without maize or industrial feed, follows organic standards and uses dynamic rotational grazing. Quiniou’s goal was to cut production costs, lower environmental impact and reduce workload—achieving what he calls a “triple win” of economic resilience, ecological sustainability and a more manageable daily routine. For more information and the full story, visit [Web-agri here](#).



Likes



Reply



Repost



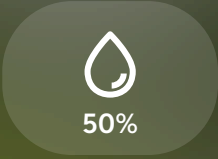
Funded by the European Union

This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101059626. Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Sweden

From August to October, national temperatures were generally in line with normal patterns, though September brought higher-than-usual rainfall. Northern Sweden showed the biggest contrasts: in most areas, meteorological autumn arrived as early as late August, while a few locations held onto summer conditions until early October. The region also saw exceptionally heavy rainfall in September, with record daily totals reaching up to 140 mm.



France

Spring offered excellent conditions for grazing and for harvesting high-quality forage, helping offset the poorer forage from 2024. Summer was far less favourable: prolonged dry periods and several heatwaves slowed grass growth, forcing many farmers to supplement their herds. Maize for silage also struggled through early summer but was saved by timely rainfall around 20 July, just as crops were flowering. As a result, both yields and quality ultimately met expectations. Rain returned again in September, followed by mild and sunny weather, allowing livestock to stay on pasture until early November in most regions. For those wishing to explore France’s monthly weather patterns and their agricultural implications in more detail, reports are available from the Institut de l’Élevage.



Italy

August brought mostly stable conditions in the first and third parts of the month, while the mid-month period saw intense thunderstorms with strong winds and hail. Temperatures were consistently high, often exceeding 40 °C inland, causing heat stress for animals except in high-altitude areas. Rainfall stayed below 20 mm across most of the island, limiting growth of spring–summer cereals and forage crops where irrigation was insufficient. Corn development ranged from flowering to maturity, with silage harvesting continuing in advanced areas. Lucerne, sorghum and millet were cut regularly where water availability allowed. Soil preparation for autumn sowing began but was slowed by mid-month rains.



September maintained a summer-like pattern, with long stable periods and only isolated rainfall events, though some areas reached 100–190 mm. Temperatures remained above average, again causing some animal heat stress. Water balance data showed widespread deficits, in places nearing –100 mm. Irrigated crops such as corn, lucerne and sorghum were harvested without issues, and early regrowth of meadows and natural pastures followed the first rains.

October rainfall was generally below average, aside from intense local events in the northeast, where monthly totals reached up to 200 mm. Temperatures were close to the long-term norm, with animals experiencing no major thermal discomfort. Late rains supported the completion of soil preparation for autumn–winter sowings and promoted germination and early growth of both semi-natural and cultivated forage crops. Harvesting of spring–summer forages, including corn and lucerne, was finalised.

Romania

Autumn 2025 in Romania brought a mix of mild periods and episodes of above-average rainfall, resulting in varied impacts on both agricultural and pastoral systems. Forecasts issued toward the end of October indicated slightly warmer-than-usual temperatures and near-normal precipitation levels, conditions that were generally favourable for continued vegetation growth.



PARTNERS







PARTNERS










CONTACT US:

-  [Instagram](#)
-  [Website](#)
-  [Facebook](#)
-  [X](#)
-  [LinkedIn](#)
-  [Youtube](#)