

Factsheet

Grazing management with suckler cows and regional marketing of beef products

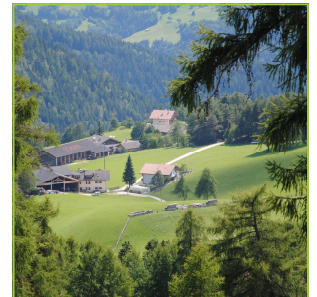


Schornhof/Markus Lintner

1 Description of the innovation



The organic farmer of the “Schornhof” keeps, with the help of his family, suckler cows, beef cattle and a bull of the races Grauvieh and Original Braunvieh on his dairy cattle farm since 2006. The animals are kept on hay meadows located close to the farm buildings and on ecologically valuable, extensive pastures (it is approx. 1 km bee-line away from the farm buildings) without import of off-farm forage. The practiced grazing management system is a flexible rotational stocking. The agricultural area of the farm is 50 ha, of which 24 ha are used for forage production, consisting of 11.4 ha leniently grazed larch pastures (no fertilisation additionally to the animal dung) and 12.6 ha grassland combining mowing (1-2 cuts) and grazing.



The animals are grazing from the end of April until the middle/end of October. In this period, they do not receive any additional forage. During this time, a reduction of labour intensity regarding the stable work is given. In the winter months, the animals get hay from the own meadows. Breeds suitable for a grazing management on moderately steep slopes which can cover their energy needs through grazing and hay, are crossed with a beef breed for meat production.

The meat of the 16 fattened oxes and -heifers is marketed under the regional label “BioBeef”. The marketing is done by the cooperative “Bioregio”, a group of 23 South Tyrolean organic mountain-farmers, conducting suckler cow keeping. The beef is slaughtered after 10-11 months by a butcher and divided up into mixed meat packages and sold regional. The main customers of this packages are private persons, hosting companies and public facilities. The silage-free feeding with only hay is a mandatory criterion for the cooperative members.

The farmer operates economically by minimizing the production costs (optimum workload of machineries, low fuel costs) as well as targeted and cost-effective investments. For grazing the ecological valuable larch pasture the farmer receives subsidies from the Province of Bolzano/Bozen proportional to the grazed area, but the area covered by the larch trees is deducted from the payments.

Added values:

- Reduction of the labour intensity
- Livestock production quality (taste, nutritive value)
- Animal health and well-



Farmer's strategy:

- Processing products (pasture-based meat)
- Short marketing chain
- Curiosity in the subject/technique, personal motivation about seeking for a nutrient cycle closed within the farm



2 Farm description

ENVIRONMENT

Main soil types: sandy loam, limestone

Climate: temperate continental climate

Average altitude (m a.s.l.): 1400

Average slope (%): 17

GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT

Grazing: Grazing: Yes, partially combined with moving (the management of the herd requires experience)

Grazing management type: flexible rotational stocking (because of the flexibility the handling should be trained; a regular inspection of the grassland areas is necessary)

Grazing duration (months/year): 6

Number of cuts on mowed areas: 1-2 cuts/year

Forage conservation type: hay

Average fertilisation rate: ≈ 96 kg N/ha; slurry in the areas surrounding the farm buildings; only animal dung on the ecologically valuable, extensive pastures

↻ acquisition rate roughage: 0

STRUCTURE

Annual Work Unit: 1.5 (the farmer is part-time employed as a teacher and works on the farm with the help of his family)

Agricultural Area (ha UAA) : 24 ha

11.4 ha pasture

12.6 ha mowed pasture

0.05 ha arable land (vegetables, crops, potatoes)

ANIMAL PERFORMANCE

Breed name:

Grauvieh

Original Braunvieh

Limousin (bull)

Total Livestock Unit (LU): 27

Average stocking rate (LU/ha UAA): 1.1

Reasons why this innovation is working on the farm

The whole family shares the aim of a sustainable, closed nutrient cycle within the farm, it's a prerequisite to present a honest and authentic image.

The farm fulfils the requirements for grazing management (size and topographic features, water supply on the grazing areas) and uses animal breeds suitable for grazing under the given farm conditions

A market niche for the seasonal, high-quality product is established and acknowledged by the consumer.