

Extensive permanent pastures with rotational grazing for increasing biodiversity and productivity



Authors:

Kirchweger Stefan, Klinglmayr Kathi
(office@studia-austria.com)



Geographical location:

Austria, Upper Austria, other countries
with permanent pasture



Keywords:

Biodiversity, livestock farming, permanent pasture,
rotational grazing

Extensive permanent pastures are a cost-efficient, productive solution for keeping such areas open. They are among the most species-rich areas in Central Europe. They create a mosaic of different habitats in a very small space and increase structural and plant diversity. The coexistence of open and closed grass cover, bare soil, overgrazed and wild grown paddocks, landscape elements, cattle tracks, and animal dung provides a variety of biotopes for many insects and plants.



Photo credit: Stefan Kirchweger

Extensive permanent pastures are grazed continuously or over a long period of time during the growing season by goats, sheep, horses, dry cows, young cattle, heifers, and extensively kept suckler cows. An early start to grazing in the growing season, using a rotational grazing system with different paddocks, and optimal stocking rates, may help tackle common pasture challenges like the spread of poisonous plants, neophytes, underutilised coarse spots, overgrazed lawns and thorny plants. Early grazing at the beginning of the growing season and paddock management promotes the growth of herbs. Shorter stocking periods and the breaks in paddock systems through rotational grazing prevent cattle tracks, reduce weed invasion and the risk of erosion but this requires sufficient fences and water supply in every paddock. Annual maintenance mowing can be carried out. Depending on the location and stocking density, mowing every 2-3 years may be sufficient. When mowing, some areas for insects should be left unmowed.

Practical recommendations

- Start grazing at the beginning of the growing season
- Use a rotational grazing system
- Shorten stocking periods
- If mowing, some areas should be left unmowed

Further Information on farmbionet.eu

This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Framework Programme under project No. 101082102. Grant agreement ID: 101182942. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation

Federal Department of Economic Affairs,
Education and Research EAER
State Secretariat for Education,
Research and Innovation SERI



Funded by
the European Union