

Innovations in grazing



EGF Working Group Grazing, Lublin, Poland

4 June 2012, Agnes van den Pol-van Dasselaar



Innovations in grazing

- Highlights of the meeting of the Working Group Grazing: 3 June 2012
- Overview grazing in Europe 2011
- Innovations in grazing



Why a Working Group Grazing?

- Forage is the main feed for dairy cattle
- Predominantly grazed (advantages/disadvantages)
- Grazing systems are important components of the landscape in almost all European countries
- Therefore important item for the European Grassland Federation
- Working Group Grazing established in 2008
- Aim: exchange knowledge on all aspects of grazing and networking
- Meeting on 3 June 2012 in Lublin, Poland

Grazing in Europe 2011

- Data on grazing in Europe are not easily available
- A survey was conducted among members of the EGF Working Group Grazing in October and November 2011
- The members were asked to provide an educated guess on the amount of grazing dairy cattle in their country and to report on recent innovations
- Data on grazing were compared with results from earlier surveys among members of the EGF Working Group 'Grazing'
- Please note: no statistical data, results are just educated guesses. No complete overview available.

Grazing in Europe 2011

- The percentage of dairy cattle grazing varies between the different countries
- Lower in Eastern and Southern Europe than in Northern and Western Europe
- Even though the data are often only an educated guess, it is clear that in general, the popularity of grazing is declining



Why “Innovations in grazing”?

- In general society favours grazing
- In most situations it is economically attractive
- The popularity of grazing in Europe is declining (due to e.g. wish to control rations, reduced grass growth in summer, need to reduce mineral losses, increased herd size, increased use of automated milking systems)
- Support for farmers is useful
- Innovations to support grazing

Grazing is complicated

- Farmers do not employ grazing
- Young farmers
- New farm situations

- “Grazing requires thinking”
- “Only few farmers manage well their pasture based systems. The potential to improve the efficiency is enormous.”
- Support is useful

Innovations in grazing

- Technical support
- Decision support tools for farmers
- Novelties in grazing management
- Innovative approaches in knowledge transfer



Mobile automated milking systems

- Useful in particular situations, e.g. in remote areas which are not easy accessible for grazing or when land is fragmented.



- *Belgium: Isabelle Dufrasne, University of Liège*
- *Trévarez, France: Valerie Brocard, Institut d'Elevage, France*

Estimating grass intake using accelerometers

- Using grazing time and bites per minute provides good results ($r^2 = 0.96$)



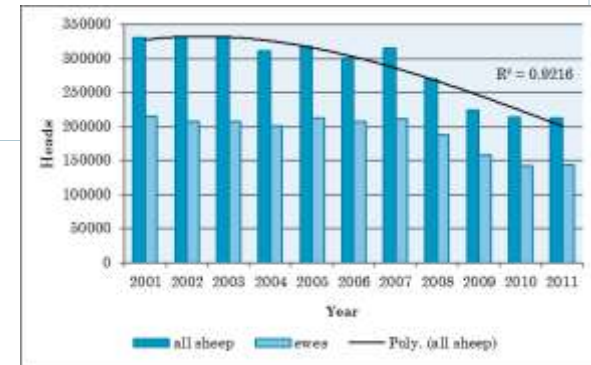
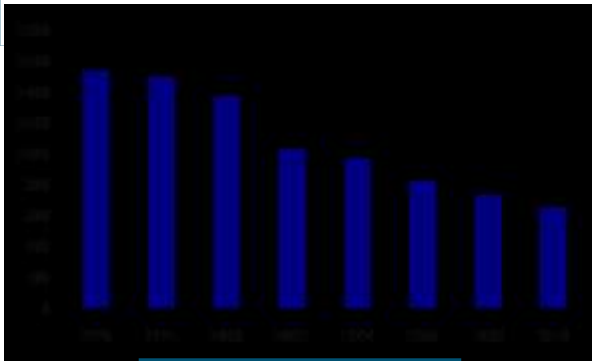
Frank Oudshoorn, Aarhus University, Denmark

Decision support tools for farmers



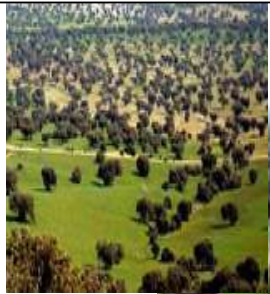
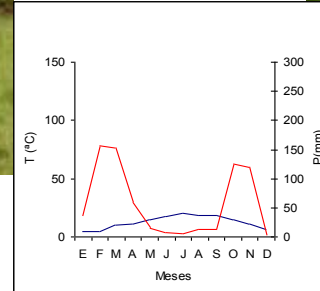
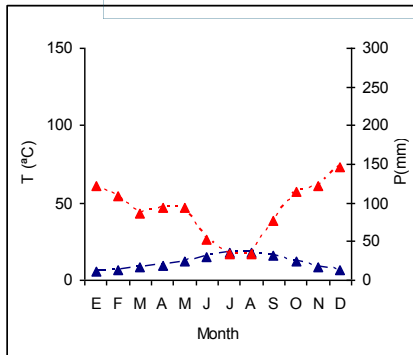
- Especially in Ireland many tools and models are available for farmers and Irish farmers actually use them
 - Weekly grass measurement, autumn budget with the 60:40 rule, spring rotation planner, grass wedge
- In the Netherlands, discussion changes from “to graze or not to graze” to “how to graze”. Simple decision support tools are needed. Adaptable to changing situations, e.g. weather
- *Deirdre Hennessy, Teagasc, Ireland*
- *Bert Philipsen, Wageningen UR Livestock Research, NL*

Grazing in Poland



- Extensive grazing of Polish Heath Sheep on pastures established on fallow lands. *Ewa Strzelec, Warsaw University of Life Sciences*
- Multisward (extension of grazing period for beef cattle, evaluation of lamb production in continuous grazing system regarding to different breeds). *Piotr Goliński, Poznan University of Life Sciences, Poland*

Grazing in Spain



- *Rosa Mosquera-Losada, Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, Spain*

Enhanced winter grazing - France

- Innovative linkage of two techniques: winter grazing + out wintering pads



- *Jean-Pierre Farrié, Institut de l'Élevage, France*

Comparison indoor feeding versus pasture-based feeding in Switzerland

- Within the conditions given in Switzerland and their related costs, it seems to be economically more interesting to reduce production costs than to increase milk yield of cows.



- *Pius Hofstetter, Education and Training Centre for Nature and Nutrition, Switzerland*

Innovative design of pasture based farm systems

- Mobile milking
- Mobile feeding
- Mobile electric fence
- Mobile roof
- Outdoor bedded pack
- Family herd
- Regional feed centre
- *Paul Galama, Wageningen UR Livestock Research, the Netherlands*



Innovative approaches in knowledge transfer

- This category is needed to make the innovations from the previous three categories work
- Focus on the needs and personal preferences of the farmer
- Example: Autograssmilk - innovative and sustainable systems combining automatic milking and precision grazing. *Bernadette O'Brien, Teagasc, Ireland*



Concluding remarks

- The popularity of grazing in Europe is declining
- Innovations in grazing are needed and available
 - Technical support
 - Decision Support Tools for farmers
 - Novelties in grazing management
 - Innovative approaches in knowledge transfer

More information

- Participants of the Working Group Grazing
- <http://www.europeangrassland.org/working-groups/grazing.html>
 - Proceedings including summaries of the presentations and discussions
 - Presentations as pdf



Innovations in grazing



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