

Reverting to grazing: farmer's conception

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Objective

Niort plain (Poitou-Charentes, France)

Several environmental factors:

- ✓ No more possibilities to irrigate maize (water protection)
- ✓ Necessity to reintroduce grassland in farming systems (protected birds)



➔ **Replacing irrigated maize silage diet for dairy cows:
Which place for reverting to grazing? Which changes in farms?**

What do farmers think about this?

Materials and methods

Results

✓ 11 individual interviews with dairy farmers

✓ 3 questions:

"What is the way you and your neighbours produce milk?"

What is the way you and your neighbours feed animals?"

What are advantages and difficulties of dairy cow grazing?"

✓ Analysis of farmer's discourse to bring to the fore their conceptions:

- which things or actions farmers are talking about?
- how farmers are talking about things or actions?

✓ Farmers distinguish 2 types of cows

10 000 liters/ lactation ↔ 8000 liters/lactation

- Regular high quality food ↔ Adapted to grazing
- Risks of fertility troubles and abortion at turn out



✓ Farmers conception about grazing

- Good for cows, suitable for the environment
- Lack of references about consequences in economics and working organisation.
- Only for small herds (< 60 cows)
- Grazing cows are always fed with maize silage
- Importance of family in knowledge passed on rotational rhythm, grass species...

Prospect

This results on farmers conceptions question research and development:

- How to insert farmers conception in researchers and advisors knowledge?
- How to organize learning about grazing for farmers who don't know anymore this practice?

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