



Goats and bees in natural silvopastoral systems

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Sławomir Sobiepanek's farm is a small 20-ha farm in Mazovian region, 50 km from Warsaw located on poor sandy soils. This is a typical agro-touristic farm, however the farmer is interested in developing goat cheese and honey production as well. What is unique here is a specific combination of goats grazing in afforested land and bee-keeping. This interaction allows maintaining biodiversity, which is beneficial for feeding both groups of animals.

Goats are grazed in a rotational system including the border area of forest and pasture. Mesh and mobile electric fences are used. The farmer observes that grazing has a positive impact on grassland biodiversity, increases soil moisture and protects against forest fire. Common invasive plants (e.g. goldenrod, black cherry) are being successfully removed by animals. There are some drawbacks and limitations – fences need to be adjusted frequently. Since goats are chasing over long distances, providing security for them is time-consuming. So far, profitability of goats production is low but it is still a diversified production. The farm delivers high quality products (goat dairy products, honey, vegetables) for the farm guests. The farm, belonging to Network of Education Farms, attracts hundreds of guests and thousands of school children every year. This shows agroforestry innovations can be a viable option for smallholders, involved in educational and agro-tourism activities.



Figure 1. Bee-keeping on wooded grassland.



Figure 2. Goats grazing in afforested land.

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