



Beef cattle grazing on wooded permanent pastures

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Due to low cost-effectiveness of milk production or the labour intensity, many of dairy farmers are moving towards beef cattle production. They are keen to effectively use permanent grasslands (partly wooded) that presently is not in compliance with Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions neither able to be paid by the CAP Pillar I. And beef cattle breeding is not labour-intensive, also with regard to livestock buildings.

In temperate climate, the cattle can be kept outside even during winters (e.g. Highland, Limousine) and this does not have negative effect on cows calving. However, bed place on pastures should be covered with dry straw and clean water and coarse fodder should be available to animals. Trees protect animals against strong winds improving heat balance of their bodies. The main strengths of the silvopasture system are: diversification of production on permanent grasslands with difficult access; restoration of abandoned lands to initial agricultural state; very low labour intensity in comparison to milk production; high-quality meat products (organic or local sold to trusted customers); soil and water protection; lower costs of heat production on farm; sale of wood to local buyers; greater biodiversity of grasslands; animal welfare improvement; local social added value. The main weaknesses: low/lack of support for woodland management; high start-up costs; slow capital trading and long-term investment; regionally differentiated wood prices and demand; different productivity and species composition of woodland/private forest



Figure 1. Highland cattle browsing forest (RZD-IUNG Kępa)

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