



Valorizing a Hydromorphic Cereal Plot through Agroforestry

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Agroforestry in an hydromorphic cereal field at GAEC de la Baronesse

Agroforestry can provide a sustainable solution for draining hydromorphic plots. Trees allow water to infiltrate deep into the soil thanks to its root system. This is the choice made by GAEC de la Baronesse, two cereal growers on the Lauragais hillsides (France). This farm has clay-limestone soils, and the lower slopes are hydromorphic. In 2013, 10 hectares of hydromorphic cereal plots were converted to agroforestry with the support of an agricultural advisory service. The trees are planted in rows spaced 32 meters apart, to allow passage of the 28-meter sprayer, with 5 meters between each tree on the row. Eight species adapted to the soil and climate have been planted on this plot to meet different uses: precious wood (*Sorbus terminalis* L., *Cornus domestica* L., *Juglans regia* L.), hardy species (*Acer campestre* L., *Quercus petraea* Matt., *Q. pubescens* willd. and *Q. robur* L.) and a melliferous species (*Tilia* spp.). On this hydromorphic plot, the walnut trees had difficulty growing due to excessive rainfall, but the three oak species proved to be very well adapted. Even if the farmer doesn't benefit economically from the trees in the short term, they fulfill their role of draining this hydromorphic plot, thus improving cereal yields.



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