


Grazing for weeding and soil preparation

Goal	Use livestock for reducing the impact on wildlife from agricultural inputs used for weeding or soil preparation.
Short description of the measure	Livestock has traditionally grazed in farms, not only in grasslands but also taking advantage of the valuable resources that can be found in arable land once the harvest is done, or under permanent crops. Wild plants, crop residues and stubbles are just a few examples of the resources that animals can use. The feeding activity is also used for cleaning fields from undesired plants, choosing the appropriate animals and during several times of the year.
Quality elements of soundly implemented biodiversity measures	Livestock management shall always respect appropriate densities for avoiding counteractive effects, such as soil compaction, overgrazing of hedges, etc. Ideally, for delivering all the benefits described in this fact sheet, animals shall graze intensively but during a very short time.
Effects on biodiversity (ecosystems, species, soil biodiversity)	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grazing for weeding helps to avoid the use of herbicides. ▪ Livestock activity attracts other animals that feed on little insects that are disturbed (such as the cattle egret or passerines). ▪ Animal droppings and dung are used by soil fauna and insects (such as dung beetles) which are sometimes endangered due to antibiotics and other products given to animals.
Other positive effects/benefit for the farmer	While feeding, animals leave manure on the fields that is also a very valuable source of organic matter. In general terms, this amount of manure cannot substitute fertilization but it is undoubtedly a valuable resource that improves soil quality.
Indicator/key data	Number of animals and days of grazing in the field.
Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ www.northcentralsare.org/Educational-Resources/Fact-Sheets/Sheep-Grazing-to-Manage-Crop-Residues-Insects-and-Weeds-in-Northern-Plains-Grain-and-Alfalfa-Systems

Further information: [Knowledge Pool](#)

This Action Fact Sheet belongs to the training package for manager of standard organisations and companies and was developed within the project LIFE Food & Biodiversity (Biodiversity in Standards and Labels of for the Food Industry). The main objective of the project is to improve the biodiversity performance of standards and sourcing requirements in the food industry by helping standard organisations to integrate efficient biodiversity criteria into their schemes and motivating food processing companies and retailers to include comprehensive biodiversity criteria into their sourcing guidelines.

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