Management of grassland by Jersey male calves nursed by ex-milking cows

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To manage some of the semi-natural grassland Jersey male calves with ex-milking cows as aunts is an alternative to suckler cows or groups of heifers from dairy cattle.

Comparing the effect of different management systems on Cirsium arvense (L.) Scop. grazing with Jersey alone was unsuccessful. Summer grazing combined with trimmings was a better alternative.

Introduktion
Jersey male calves are usually killed just after birth, but if two calves are coupled in the right way to an ex-milking cow the Jerseys can manage on some of the semi-natural grasslands.

Aim
• To examine grazing with Jersey at semi-natural grassland
• To compare the ability of six different management regimes to reduce C. arvense to make room for a higher biodiversity (2008-2010)

Site
Soil: Mainly mineral soil – from wet to dry.

Management plots
T1: No management
T2: One cut, not removed
T3: One cut, removed
T4: One cut, removed, grazing
T5: Continuous summer grazing with trimming
T6: Continuous summer grazing, no trimming

Results and conclusion
• The cattle group of Jersey calves with aunts (ex-milking cows) seems to be a useful resource in the management of the easier semi-natural grassland. Here they can substitute some of the extensive types of suckler cattle, which can then move on to more difficult swards, e.g. with more low digestible forage.
• Difficult species like C. arvense can not be removed by the cattle alone, but it seems that a combination of trimming and continuous summer grazing is a possible strategy when this species occur in substantial amounts.
• A reasonable economy could be obtained for the farmer if the meat is getting a good price and the grassland is available for no cost, e.g. areas belonging to the municipality.

In the figure one cut is about 7 June. Trimmings were about 10 June, 16. July and 5. September in the two previous years, where no significant difference was found.

In the table: The margin for Jersey grass calves with 750 grams daily gain in a 180 days grazing system.

| Yield in total | 1273 |

Costs in total

Costs in total

Gross margin per produced calf

731