

AGROFORESTRY SYSTEMS: SILVOPASTORAL



Year of foundation	2003
Specialization	Ecological livestock breeding
Farm area	250 ha
Number of employees	10
Year of starting agroforestry practices	2018-2019
Location	Turová, cadastre of Budča village (district Zvolen)
Web page	www.farmaturova.sk

The farm Turová has been **breeding cattle breeds** since 2006. The whole breed has been registered in the **organic farming system** since 2008, where strict rules must be observed. The farm manages approximately 235 hectares of farmland, which serves as a base for cattle. From the beginning, the main product of the farm was beef cattle and in lesser extent hay. In the absence of a abattior capable of slaughtering cattle in organic quality, all their animals were usually mixed with non-organic animals in one camion transporting them for slaughter or for further fattening abroad. This market niche inspired them to **build up an organic abattior for slaughtering cattle**.



The farm has long been engaged in **the production and trade of baled hay**. Since 2006 the farm has **been breeding of suckler cows** and since 2008 the whole farm has been operated in the organic farming system. In 2013 an **abattior for organic cattle processing** was launched on the farm. The farm has no experience in tree growing and agroforestry measures.

The first agroforestry practices have begun to apply in the period 2013-2014 by modifying existing overgrown, original pastures. During their cleaning, the entire disposal of existing trees was not carried out, but they targeted **cleaning of natural seeding, modification of branches of existing solitary trees**. The main purpose of this activity was to stand thinning and allow the growth of grazing. A part of the "recultivation" was also the treatment of trees by removing the lower branches, so that the area under them was mechanically accessible. At the same time a **classical seeding of cultural grasses** was realized. The whole procedure was carried out intuitively in order to obtain a grazing area that would be more valuable for livestock in the warm summer. The areas thus obtained were „declared“ as being eligible for payment in respect of the Agricultural Paying Agency.



- Based on proven measures (cleaning of natural seeding, stand thinning and others), they would like to apply these activities in a larger extent also on other areas. They expect to improve grazing for their cattle.
- At the same time, they would like to apply this procedure to areas that are primarily used for mowing.
- They would also like to gradually clean the original historical terraces and create/restore the original non-forest vegetation in the cadastral area of Kašová Lehôtka.



In the past on the farm they proceeded purely intuitively. They first encountered the term agroforestry in the summer of 2019. The information was subsequently taken from the Internet. Subsidies were not received.

According to their opinions, agroforestry should also be combined with other measures enhancing the ecological value of the landscape, such as water retention measures, respectively agricultural practices suitable for agroforestry. Training / courses should therefore be prepared, where practical advice on the implementation of these measures can be obtained.

DESCRIPTION OF USED TECHNIQS DURING ESTABLISHING OF AGROFORESTRY SYSTEMS

As mentioned above, farmers proceeded intuitively and based on their own experience. **Depending on the form of the original – left trees, the spacing was kept approximately 10-15 m. Pruning saws removed the branches in the understory.**



THREATS/CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATIONS

- A huge problem is too **many wild boars**, which often spade well preserved areas, what largely depreciated their work.
- **Inadequate legislation and misunderstanding by the authorities** are major threats.
- The challenge will therefore be to amend legislation, include agroforestry systems as eligible areas for payment by the Agricultural Paying Agency, develop best practices and procedures and to link them with water retention measures.

During the cleaning of overgrown areas, the farm often got into a dispute with the Agricultural Paying Agency. In order to fulfill the sense of agroforestry, they proceeded to "recultivation" such areas sensitively and they left the necessary solitary trees, the Agricultural Paying Agency has reduced their „eligible“ area several times. This was particularly the case, when the area was assessed by aerial photography. In this way, the inspectors are probably not able to assess the extent of agricultural activity under the tree crowns, and withal there is a grassland involved, which is intensively used as a pasture.



FUTURE PLANS

In the future at the farm, they would like to continue to **cleaning next overgrown areas in a silvopastoral way**. They are also interested in verifying the possibilities of combining agroforestry with water retention measures. Given the focus of the farm on the production of hay, **they also want to establish of alley cropping that should be purposefully designed along contour lines**.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The message from farmers in Turová reads:

“Given the link between agriculture and forestry, it is essential that the farmer acquires basic knowledge in forestry, respectively landscaping.”

KEY WORDS

Organic farm, organic livestock farming, silvopastoral systems, pastures



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