

Grazing as a tool to maintain biodiversity of grassland – a review

Ewa Metera¹, Tomasz Sakowski^{1*}, Krzysztof S?oniewski¹, Barbara Romanowicz²

¹ Polish Academy of Sciences Institute of Genetics and Animal Breeding, Jastrz?biec, 05-552 Wólka Kosowska, Poland, ² Compassion in World Farming, River Court, Mill Lane, Godalming, Surrey GU7 1EZ, UK

Abstarc :

The intensification of agriculture has a great influence on grassland, resulting in the disappearance of many plant and animal species and changing open landscape. Sustainable farming practices, which use farm animal grazing, are seen as a potential solution to continued biodiversity loss resulting from over- or undergrazing. In the article the influence of grazing animals on grassland biocenoses and their use in active biodiversity protection are reviewed based on over 100 references. It is concluded that animal grazing can be a tool to maintain or restore biodiversity of open landscape and contribute to the aesthetic and leisure importance of grassland. The successful use of grazing for environment protection and biodiversity enhancement requires careful planning and should be adapted to local conditions. A deep understanding of the relationship between herbivores, plant, and small animal communities and the abiotic environment is essential. Therefore, there is a need for comprehensive research programmes in the area of extensive grazing, combining expertise from ecology, botany, agronomy, animal production and rural economics. The research should include both field experiments and development of appropriate models, allowing for the design of agroenvironmental schemes aimed at the protection of grassland biocenoses.

Key Word :

biodiversity, grassland, grazing, herbivores, landscape protection

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