



Improve feed energy self-sufficiency through growing feed energy crops such as fodder beets and grains that can replace concentrates

Topic	Topic
Economic resilience 	Animal welfare 

Background

The **feeding** of dairy animals is a very important factor in the efficiency of farm production. It is also a key factor in animal welfare, health, longevity, duration of economic use and reproduction. The farmer's **choice of feed ingredients** can have a significant impact not only on the quantity and quality of the milk, but also on the **overall economic performance** of the farm.

Why feed energy crops are important?

- In terms of percentage, the **success factors** on a cattle farm are: feeding - 40%, breeding - 20%, housing conditions - 20% and farm management - 20%.
- Cows with fodder must receive **sufficient** dry matter, with adequate energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. Although minerals have no energy value, they are important for the animal's body because they participate in all vital processes.
- The **diet of dairy cattle** must include roughage (grasses, maize, hay, straw), protein feed (rapeseed, soya beans, peas, beans and urea), energy feed (wheat, barley, triticale, oats, maize, beet, sugar beet, palm oil), minerals, vitamins, and other feed.
- The feed should be **as varied as possible** to ensure that the diet contains sufficient protein, fat, carbohydrates, minerals and biologically active substances in the right proportions.
- The **quality of fodder** is important for a dairy farm as it allows farmers to keep production costs down allowing them to make a profit.

Positive features

- Energy crops **enrich** the cattle ration.
- Sugar beets are **easily digested** by cattle.
- Pressed sugar beet slices have a relatively **high energy and feed value**. Although the protein content of the slices is low, it is more favourable than that of cereals due to the composition of some **amino acids** and from a nutritional point of view.

Be careful, especially on these points

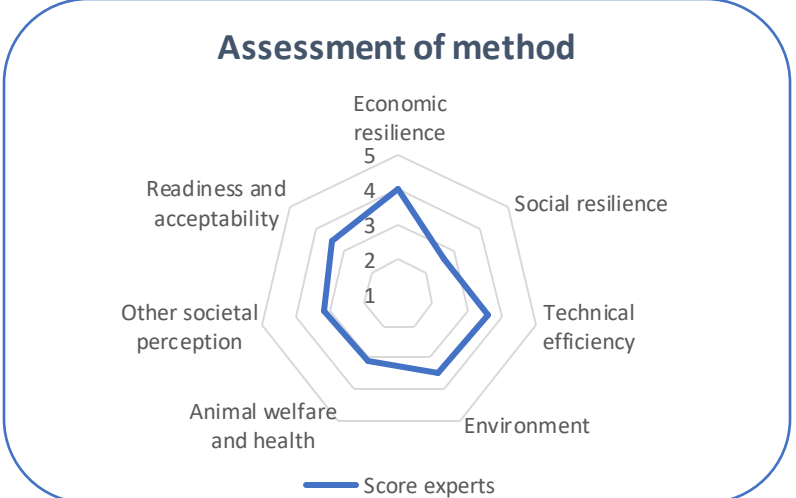
Changing the way we feed our cows can affect not only the quantity and quality of their production, but also their health. This is why it is essential to ensure adequate energy, protein, nutrients, minerals and vitamins.

Specific advises

In order to maintain a sufficient amount of fat in the milk, it is necessary that the feed contains **sufficient digestible fibre**, which is obtained by feeding good quality grass silage or energy crops.

What makes energy crops special?

- Energy plants are characterized by high energy value and digestible fibre content. The inclusion of these plants in the diet promotes an **increase in milk production**, and at the same time a **decrease in the cost of feed**.
- Sugar beet fibre, due to its low lignin and high pectin content, is easily digestible by cattle and has a favourable effect on their **milk fat content**.
- Sugar beet is valuable as a source of energy. Pectin is degraded more slowly in the rumen, which is why the pH value of the rumen content remains above 6,0. This creates favourable conditions for the activity and development of the fibre-degrading **microflora**. This also improves the utilisation and digestibility of the other feeds in the ration.



Quote of the farmer:
“Good feed is good milk, and good milk is a healthy animal”

