

Livestock Systems Department

Title

Innovative and sustainable systems combining automatic milking and precision grazing

Abstract

Dairy farming has adopted automatic milking (AM) at an accelerating rate for reasons such as improvement in lifestyle, less physical work, attracting skilled labour and increased profitability (higher milk production, lower labour costs). Up to now, indoor feeding systems have been well adapted to AM, however grazing has not, leading to a decrease in grazing on AM farms. Grazing has many advantages for economy, environment, animal welfare and product quality, so it is essential that integrated grazing and AM dairy systems are developed. Traditional pasture research does not provide the answers when AM is combined with grazing. The objective of AUTOGRASSMILK is to develop an integrated grazing and AM production system, appropriate for different regions and systems in Europe. This will be achieved by (1) developing feeding strategies for dairy cows incorporating grazing with AM; (2) using new precision grazing technologies to optimise integration of grazing and AM; (3) increasing the sustainability of integrated grazing and AM technologies; (4) developing a tool to allow economic efficiency to be optimised when grazing and AM are combined; (5) continuously disseminate new technology to end-users. Thus, AUTOGRASSMILK will analyze, develop, experiment and disseminate concepts for integrating grazing and AM for dairy farms.

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