Introduction

The advantages of grazing are multiple:
- **Environmental**: Permanent grassland = carbon sink
- Preservation of landscape
- **Economical**: Grazing => decrease in feeding costs
- Positive effect on cows’ health
- **Societal**: Good image for the consumer

However grazing is decreasing and grassland areas are disappearing.

The aim of the survey:
To get an overview of grazing practices and farmers’ expectations
Thus to suggest ways of improving these practices and limiting grassland loss disappearance.

Material and Methods

A questionnaire of eighteen questions focused on
- the description of the farm
- the grazing practices
- the perceptions and expectations

sent on 10/12/2015 to 3,152 Walloon dairy farmers with the help of the Comité du lait

Results

965 answers - 31% answer rate (28/2/2016)
90.5% answers = conventional system
9.5% = organic farms
957 farms = grazing vs 35 farms = no grazing

**Grazing of lactating cows**: 96% farms
96% grazed more than 4 months
74% of farms grazed the lactating cows day and night
Supplement was given in 99% of farms during the grazing period.

Composition of complement given during the grazing season

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% answers</th>
<th>Hay</th>
<th>Grass</th>
<th>Maize</th>
<th>Corn</th>
<th>Concentrate</th>
<th>others</th>
</tr>
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<p>| % of grass in cows’ diet during the grazing season |</p>
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Reasons for no grazing
- Environmental reasons: 9/35 farms
  - bad weather
  - poor soil conditions
  - both
- Management difficulties: 27/35 farms
  - difficulty to manage cows in pasture (18/35),
  - the distance to pastures (12/35)
  - limited grazeable areas (20/35).
- Economic reasons: 14/35 farms
  - lower milk production at pasture
  - other

Discussion - conclusion

- Grazing is still very common in Wallonia.
- The increased herd/farm size seems hinder grazing
- Management difficulties are the most common reason for no grazing
- In grazing farms, the proportion of grass in cows’ feed was moderate, even during the grazing period and a high level of supplementation was reported.

This may suggest low confidence in grass quality and quantity.