

PRACTICE ABSTRACT

**SHARING EXPERIENCES FROM:
UNITED KINGDOM**

**Grazing winter cereals
with sheep in Scotland**

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Changeable weather patterns, including flooding and droughts, over recent years have raised Scottish farmers' interest in sourcing alternative forage options beyond their usual grazing and silage land. Over the last 5 or 6 years, a number of arable farms in Scotland have linked up with graziers to try this approach.

Winter cereals appear very resilient to being hard grazed by sheep and recover well, with experience so far showing little adverse impact on yields or crop and soil characteristics. Grazing does need to be undertaken early enough to limit potential damage to crop growing points, the latest successful experience we have is having finished grazing by mid-March. Winter cereals have been intensively "mob" grazed over a few days, or more extensively grazed over several weeks or even months. This has been done on crops that have variously been sown early, specifically to graze them early (pre-Christmas), or to hold back forward crops that were sown at typical drilling dates by grazing in the New Year.

All approaches seem to work well with no obvious downsides reported. A trustworthy relationship between the arable farmer and the grazier will need to be developed, and any financial criteria agreed. Winter wheat, barley and oats have all shown excellent feed value profiles. Some Network farmers grazing their winter cereals with sheep report reductions in seed rates and N fertilizer usage and others indicate lower disease levels with potential to reduce fungicide use.





ABOUT MIXED IN UK

In United Kingdom the MIXED project is implemented by SRUC, Aberystwyth University, SAC Consulting and SAOS in collaboration with two groups of farmers practicing Mixed Farming and Agroforestry Systems (MIFAS) in Scotland.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

MIXED (Multi-actor and transdisciplinary development of efficient and resilient MIXED farming and agroforestry systems), an EU-project, is supporting the development of European Mixed Farming and Agroforestry Systems (MiFAS) that are more efficient and resilient to climate changes.

7M€

BUDGET

19

PARTNERS

10

COUNTRIES

Agriculture in Scotland includes both specialized and mixed farming. Traditionally mixed systems include cereals, beef and sheep. In the most productive cropping areas very few farmers have livestock anymore. East-West Cattle Grazing Project – a network of farmers trialing the out wintering of breeding cattle, that aims to evidence the financial and environmental value of moving breeding cattle to lower cost natural resources.



MIXED partners from United Kingdom:

