

Slovenian Grassland Society: science, profession and practice

B. Kramberger¹, T. Vidrih², J. Čop³ and M. Vidrih²

¹Faculty of Agriculture, University of Maribor, Vrbanska 30, 2000 Maribor, Slovenia, Email: branko.kramberger@uni-mb.si, ²Department of Agronomy, Biotechnical Faculty, University of Ljubljana, Jamnikarjeva 101, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Keywords: grassland society, Slovenia, less favoured areas

Description of Society The Slovenian Grassland Society (SGS) was established in 1993. It has around 120 members. A half of members are active farmers, around 10% are scientists, the rest are employed in extension services or other agricultural enterprises (seed companies, administration bodies, etc.)

Highlights of actions Publishing professional and scientific papers represents one of the important activities of the society (e.g. Čop, 1998; Kramberger, 1998; Vidrih, 1999; Vidrih, 2004). In addition, the organisation of professional and scientific meetings and expert guidance and organisation of panel discussions of complex problems related to grassland management and forage production are important activities. The panel discussions, covering various topics (Table 1), are held at our annual meetings. Through oral presentations and discussions the participants get familiarised with the latest findings of scientists. Also field trips are organised for individual case studies. These discussions are covered by reporters from professional agricultural magazines. By doing this, topical issues are regularly reported to the wider professional audience as well as general public. In order to ensure wide involvement in the activities, the annual general meeting of the SGS and its panel discussions are held at a different place in Slovenia each year. Society also has a web page, where all interested in grassland management can find much information (<http://www2arnes.si/surtvidr/index.htm>).

Table 1 Foci of each year's annual meeting of the Slovenian Grassland Society

Year	Focus	Place	Region of Slovenia
1994	Grassland renovation by direct drilling	Vrhnika	Central
1995	Recultivation of hilly pastures by animals as a tool	Nova Gorica	Southeast
1996	Pasture management of hilly areas	Bohinj	Northwest
1997	Cereal sod seeding into pasture sward	Postojna	Southwest
1998	Effectiveness of subsidies for pasture cultivation	Zreče	Northeast
1999	Cattle wintering on pastures	Pivka	Southwest
2000	Experiences with seeding of grass clover mixtures	Ptuj	East
2001	Summer animal grazing on ski field terrains	Maribor	Northeast
2002	Recultivation of abandoned arable crop fields by grazing	Rakičan	East
2003	With animal grazing to food of good quality for people	Rodik	Southwest
2004	Grassland management on Ljubljana marsh and surrounded hills	Vrhnika	Central

Up to now, our panel discussions (Table 1) have focused primarily on grassland cultivation and pasture management. Consequently, in Slovenia there is a trend away from indoor animal production to production based on pastures. The spread through Slovenia of sward renovation by direct drilling owes much to the activities of SGS in the last decade. To most farmers who decide upon such an approach to sward management, machinery services are offered in order to facilitate reseeding with special drills.

Activities to influence policy or public perception Apart from carrying out the planned activities, the SGS members strive also to affect public perception and have an influence on the creation of agricultural policy in various governmental bodies and professional commissions.

Plans for future We intend to stress the importance of the multi-purpose grassland areas. We intend to strengthen the membership and start publishing a professional journal, which would, for the time being, be issued annually.

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