

## Innovative approach and locally rooted:

**SC Agro Solomonescu SRL was established in 2003, having two main activities: dairy production and crop production.**

There are 150 Romanian Black Spotted cattle, of which about 80 are dairy cows. Animal housing is based on a free stall design, with centralized milking parlour and basic facilities for compound feed processing (grinder, homogenizer). The milk is marketed locally for the production of various dairy products (cheese, yoghurt, etc.).

The main purpose of the crop production is to provide feed for the animals, with the surplus being marketed as raw materials. On the 600 ha of agricultural land alfalfa, corn (both for silage and grains), barley, sunflower and oats are produced amongst other crops. In line with the farms attempts to provide protein from local sources, they also cultivate some pea and soybean crops. Therefore, the farm buys only mineral-vitamin premixes and, when the prices are good, some by-products (brans, brewery wastes, etc.).

The farm uses a low-input approach with average milk production up to 5000 l / lactation, low levels of concentrates in the animal diets and low use of chemical fertilizers. However, the diets are properly balanced, the owners being aware of the impor-



tance of protein, mineral and vitamins; this shows that they are open to implement technical information and novelties, which displays an innovative approach. Consistently, the owners are open to running various projects – e.g. a SAPARD project for farm modernization in 2005.

The main role of Agro-Solomonescu in the SOLID project is to test the effects of several by-products in the diets of dairy cows, under farm conditions. Thus, under the guidance of the Romanian research partner, the National Research-Development Institute for Animal Biology and Nutrition (INCDBNA), they will assess the effects of Camelina meal and grape marc on the yield and quality of milk, intake level, etc. Also, the effects on dairy products will be investigated, in the endeavour to develop new foods.

Also, Agro-Solomonescu is involved in the identification of the research needs, dissemination of the results and assisted the Romanian research partner (INCDBNA) in performing the sustainability assessment of Romanian low-input farms.

