





## Utilization of Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*) as Bedding for Housed Suckler Cows: Practical and Economic Aspects for Farmers

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### Abstract

The common reed (*Phragmites australis*) has long been used in wetlands of the French Atlantic coast as fodder and bedding or roof thatching, among other uses. This article explores the practical and economic aspects of utilizing common reed for housing suckler cows compared to straw. Based on a study conducted over two years on a research farm of the French National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment (INRAE), located in the marshes of Rochefort-sur-Mer, we show that reed is a good alternative to cereal straw and its cost is quite competitive compared to straw; the closer the reed bed is to the farm, the more competitive it is. By mobilizing the concept of restoration of natural capital, we lay the foundations for a debate on a possible revival of this ancient practice, with the idea that ecological restoration of reed beds can benefit biodiversity and the economy of wetlands farms.

**Keywords:** mixed crop-livestock farms; bedding; restoration of natural capital; reed beds; wetlands; bioeconomy