A FARM UNLIKE ANY OTHER

Photographic documentary by
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Photo 0**1** - **The Ferme de la Baillerie**
The *Ferme de la Baillerie* was built in the 15th century on an outcrop overlooking the Try-au-Chêne plateau, Bousval, in the Brabant Wallony region of Belgium.

Photo 0**2** - **The protagonists**
Johanne, Christophe, Sylvain and Simon are truly motivated, all four work on a project that is in perfect harmony with their values. The statutes of the cooperative guarantee the respect of the criteria defined for the project, such as self-sufficiency, sustainability, solidarity and ecology.

Photo 0**3** -
The land at *la Baillerie* wakes up to the last onslaughts of winter, and, like every day, the daily tasks begin.

Photo 0**4** - **Rituals - Milking**
The first task in a long day, collecting the milk empties the goats' bursting udders and marks the first step towards making cheese.

Photo 0**5** -
One goat produces an average of 3 to 4 litres per day, or around 900 to 1200 litres a year. It takes 5 litres to make 1kg of raw cheese. A goat will eat on average 3kg of hay and grazes on 15kg of fresh grass per day.

Photo 0**6** - **Rituals - Feeding**
Every morning after milking, the goats get their daily ration of beets and for the winter, some silage.

Photo 0**7** -
Beets give energy and silage gives proteins. Quantities are calculated with care to ensure that the goats produce a maximum of milk.

Photo 0**8** - **Rituals – Making the cheese**
All the cheese produced at *la Baillerie* is made from unpasteurised milk, without any added preservatives.

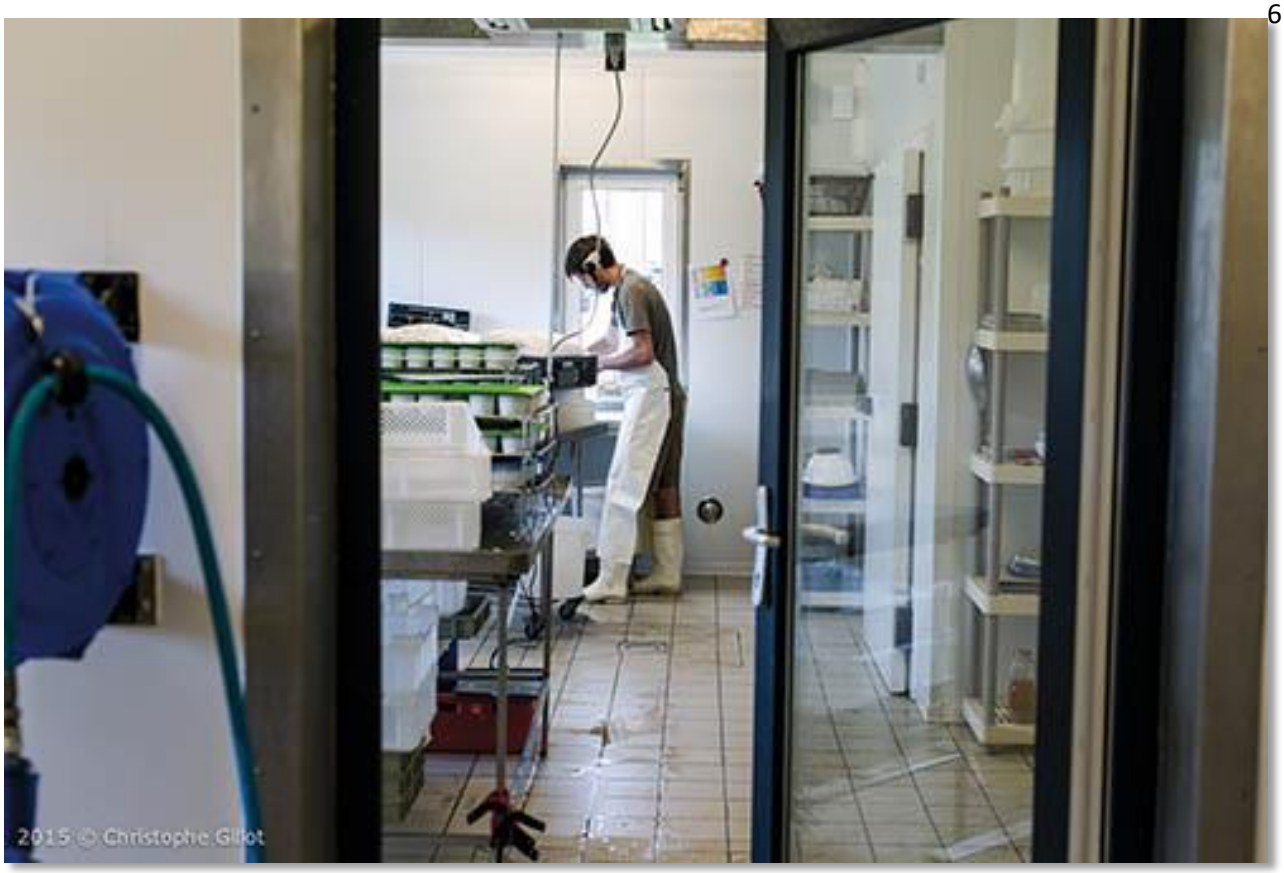

Photo 0**9** - Cheesemaking is an art mastered by all the members of the cooperative, requiring skill and experience. The various cheeses are made by varying parameters such as temperature, acidity of the milk, and the quantity of rennet (the name of the enzyme found in the stomach of the young goat).

Photo **10** - Cheesemaking puts the craftsman in direct contact with "living matter". In charge of creating and adjusting the various recipes, Johanne "feels" the transformation of the raw material and delights in the symbiosis present between all the elements involved.

Photo **11** - **Rituals - Selling**
Five times a week, *la Baillerie* sells its cheeses at the markets, which constitute its principal source of revenue. The farm would not be able to function without short-loop, local sales, which reduce the number of intermediaries between the producer and the consumer. In this way, the farm keeps control over the prices and is able to invest any profits in sustainable agriculture.

Photo **12** - Bright sunshine comes to announce spring and the promise of an abundant future.

Photo **13** - **Renaissance - Birth**
Normally goats are born in spring, but by artificially varying the daylight hours, some of the goats can be "desynchronised" to give birth in September, thus maintaining a constant production of milk throughout the year.

Photo **14** - **Renaissance - Seeds**
The time for sowing and the first harvest, is also the time to prepare the mixture of seeds. Composed of grasses and leguminous plants, it will give forage that is rich in sugars and proteins, with high yield. This mix also ensures good nitrogen fertilisation of the soil.

Photo **15** - **Renaissance - Fertility**
Fertilisation of the ground is another focus of activity. The land needs to provide high yield and so fertilisation needs to be excellent.

Photo **16** -
At *la Baillerie*, manure is the principal fertiliser, mixed with straw, and is rich in the organic material that plants need as food.

Photo **17**-**Renewal - Union**
Soil and weather conditions are perfect for sowing. It is a difficult task due to the terrain and the tools used. Christophe is worried as the operation must be carried out with precision; the promise of a good harvest starts here, with the union of the seed, water, and earth.

Photo **18** - **Commitment – Fresh grass**
Demanding unrelenting commitment, land that is well-cared for by a farmer is his guarantee of self-sufficiency.
The farm has attained self-sufficiency in the production of forage by optimising the use of its land.
"Self-produced food", an indispensable key to self-sufficiency and sustainability, is a way in which the farm shows its solidarity with third-world countries whose lands and farmers are too often exploited to produce the food additives needed by animals in the intensive industrial farms of the richer countries.

Photo **19** - In order to produce enough milk, *La Baillerie* has taken the option of intensive but ecological farming. The goats are reared indoors in order to regulate their daily food intake. The food itself (grass, maize, beets) is all produced on the farm, meaning that no external supplements are required.

Photo **20** - **Sylvain**

Photo 21 - October is the month of solidarity, with dirty hands and bent backs all around. As in previous years, the friends of the farm come to help harvest the beets. Over a weekend, with the team spirit that comes from shared hard work, volunteers pull the beet from the ground, cut it and throw it into trailers, talking, laughing, suffering...
It is hard work but the goodwill and motivation of the people involved allows the farm to manage its annual harvest of beets on its own.

Photo **22** - E**volution – the hayshed**
The constant evolution at *la Baillerie* depends on the talents of its residents, turning farmers into occasional welders. .
Here a hayshed is being installed inside the goats' building.