

## **Impact assessment of changes to the quality scheme**

The carbon emissions of farms under the quality scheme are neutral or negative, which has been mapped in various pilot projects carried out by the Estonian Fund for Nature in 2018–2023 with the project *Eat 4 Change Meat Guide* and the *BovINE* project for the dissemination of sustainable practices, introducing various climate impact assessment tools.

The farms under the food quality scheme use a pasture-based production method and a minimal share of purchased feed, resulting in a very small environmental footprint. To support results-based management of farms, an international assessment tool needs to be used, producing for the farmer a report that lists recommendations for further action. Higher profits and a healthier living environment go hand in hand and are interconnected. The richer the biodiversity of the soil, the higher the quality of the feed and the healthier the livestock, which improves the production capacity and quality of the farm. In addition, the results of the climate impact assessment report are a strong marketing argument that can also be used to raise consumer awareness of the positive environmental impact of grass-fed cattle farming. Often, a more climate-friendly approach to grass-fed beef farming only requires a change in practices and habits (feeding, breeding and grazing) and no major investments are needed. However, this requires first mapping and measuring the initial level of all farms under the scheme.