

## CZECH REPUBLIC

### Biodiversity's restoration, preservation & enhancement

#### Location

Kašperské Hory

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P4 – Ecosystems  
management

#### Measure

M11 – Organic farming

#### Funding (EUR)\*

Total budget 272 719

EAFRD 204 539

National/Regional 68 180

#### Project duration

2015 – 2019

#### Project promoter

Statek Kašperské Hory s.r.o.

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#### Website

<https://statek.kasphory.cz/>

\* M10 + M11 + M12 + M13

An example of a large-scale previously state owned farm, which now successfully combines economic sustainability and the provision of public goods.

### Summary

The Farm Kašperské Hory is located in the Šumava natural park (also known as “The Bohemian Forest”) in the Czech Republic. The farm was founded in 1996 after the break-down of the large-scale socialist State Farm. The farm gradually reduced its farming intensity and in the late 1990s entered the organic scheme.



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Since then, the farm has focussed on high-nature-value farming in mountain areas and extensive cattle production. It currently manages 875 hectares of perennial grassland and specializes in the breeding of quality Simmental cattle. One of the unique features of the farm is that it is 100% owned by the municipality of Kašperské Hory.

### Results

The farm provides stewardship of the landscape with nearly 900 hectares of meadows and pastures, as well as securing 14 jobs for local people.

The farm uses a sustainable beef cattle production model, demonstrating how to achieve a good balance between productive agriculture and landscape maintenance.

The organic farming measure (M11) enabled the farm to create a highly resilient system that can better adapt to the negative impacts of climatic change.

### Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Despite being quite a large farm, it has a substantial capacity to attend to subtle nuances related to nature and animal husbandry due to its investment in labour and approach to farm management.
- ❑ Large-scale organic farms are often criticized for receiving huge financial support, while delivering nothing for society. This case serves as a good example of agro-environment subsidies and organic farming incentives going towards the purposeful maintenance of the landscape and tangible improvements for the region.

## Context

The farm Kašperské Hory was established from the privatization of a former socialist State farm. The transformation was not easy as most of the land and properties of the state farm were returned back to private owners and what remained was difficult to transform into a private business, or even to sell. It unsuccessfully engaged in intensive arable crop and milk production until the municipality Kašperské Hory took it over in the early 1990s (setting up a non-profit organization for this purpose in 1993, which was replaced by a limited liability company in 1996).

The new owners gradually ceased milk production and reduced the intensive crop production before starting to pursue extensive farming methods that better suit the mountain region, which is of high natural value. In 1999, when organic sector subsidies were launched in the Czech Republic, the farm turned to organic production.

## Objectives

The objectives for the support received under M11, are to:

- implement farming activities that match and enhance the environmental conditions of the area;
- develop agricultural practices that will have a positive impact on nature and the landscape, particularly in terms of biodiversity and soil fertility;
- breed high-quality cattle that are suitable for extensive production;
- create an economically viable enterprise that is at the same time capable of producing a wide-range of public goods.

## Activities

The Farm uses RDP - M11 support for the entire land (874,9 ha) with a small part (3,17 ha) managed in accordance with the Natura 2000 requirements. Also, M10 represents an additional commitment to supporting nature and the landscape; especially through the sub-measure focused on perennial grasslands (sub-measure 10.1.4). This concerns commitments that are not covered under the organic farming measure.



The farm employs 14 local people, most of whom are under 30 years of age. A large part of the farm's activities require intensive labour both for landscape management and animal husbandry. The land is divided into 143 land fields that include pastures and meadows. This structure requires dividing the cattle stock into small herds of around 30 animals and moving them between pastures frequently. When animals are moved from a pasture, the land is mulched in order to support the fast recovery of the grassland.

The farm management works with ecology experts in order to balance agricultural practices with the nature protection needs of each area. For example, they purposefully restore landscape elements such as creeks and tree groves to preserve the original state of the landscape. Equally, where the management of meadows is concerned, the farm avoids the use of machinery for cutting large fields of grassland, opting instead to support the natural reproduction of the grass species and winter hay yields that are needed for feeding the animals.

Landscape management is not the only activity that generates revenue for the farm. The farms also specializes in the breeding of Simmental cattle. The farm is recognised for the quality of its animals and currently keeps around 300 cows and 15 breeding bulls. In the past, young cattle were mainly exported abroad (Slovenia, Croatia, Italy and Turkey), but the farm has recently started to cooperate with a Czech farmer who buys suckling cattle to rear for meat production.

## Main Results

The farm has successfully transitioned from being a post-socialist state farm to becoming an economically viable enterprise that generates revenue for the owner (the municipality) as well as environmental and public goods for the local inhabitants and visitors. The farm provides stewardship of the landscape with nearly 900 hectares of meadows and pastures, as well as securing 14 jobs for local people.

The organic agricultural practices applied in the nature-protected area and the natural park can serve as an example of good practice, where agri-environmental subsidies are turned into tangible public goods.

The farm uses a sustainable beef cattle production model, demonstrating how to achieve a good balance between productive agriculture and landscape maintenance.

The organic farming measure (M11) enabled the farm to create a highly resilient system that can better adapt to the negative impacts of climatic change.

## Key lessons

The farm represents a special case as it is owned by the municipality of Kašperské Hory. What was originally seen as an economic burden for the town in the early 1990s, is now proudly showcased as a genuine combination of economic prosperity and public goods provision.

Despite being quite a large farm (875 ha), it has a substantial capacity to attend to subtle nuances related to nature and animal husbandry due to its investment in labour and approach to farm management. This is a major factor of its success.

Large-scale organic farms are often criticized for receiving huge financial support, while delivering nothing for society. This case serves as a good example of agro-environment subsidies and organic farming incentives going towards the purposeful maintenance of the landscape and tangible improvements for the region. The case shows that organic cattle farmers can adopt approaches that have a significant and positive impact on nature and the welfare of animals.

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### Additional sources of information

n/a