

## Slovenia

### Improve the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector

#### Location

Makole

#### Programming period

2007-2013

#### Axis / Priority

Axis 1

#### Measure

M121 - Modernisation of agricultural holdings

#### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 1.34 mil  
EAFRD 0.48 mil  
National/region. 0.16 mil  
Private 0.7 mil

#### Project duration

2014 – 2015

#### Project promoter

Andrej Hajšek

#### Contact

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#### Website

n/a

Investment support from the EAFRD was used for the construction of the new cowshed for dairy cows. This enabled increasing milk production while improving the animals wellbeing.

### Summary

The Hajšek farm in north-eastern Slovenia, over the years evolved from a mixed production farm into a farm specialised in milk production. In order to remain competitive the beneficiary needed to expand the farm's production capacity while improving the well being of his livestock.



Using M121 support a new cowshed was built for a free-range farming. Its sophisticated design without fixed walls and extensive use of wood allows adapting to weather conditions. The roof ridge can be opened, while ventilators are installed on the ceiling. The interior equipment includes a misting system which allows cooling of animals during hot days. ICT equipment such as cameras and a computer enable remote control of the milking robots.

### Results

The new cowshed now accommodates about 100 dairy cows. Thanks to the investment milk production is gradually increasing to about 1 million litres annually with the aim to reach 1.2 million litres.

Wellbeing of the cattle significantly improved. The new equipment decreases the chances for occurrence of injuries.

The purchase and instalment of ICT equipment increased control of the milking process. The data are stored electronically and always available. In case of deficiencies in the operation of milking robots, the farmer receives an alert over the phone.

### Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ A decision for each investment should be well thought in advance from several aspects.
- ❑ It is vital to explore both technological and market aspects on the investment design. The project was prepared with the support of an agricultural advisor and a specialist for animal nutrition who developed the appropriate solutions regarding the construction and equipment of the cowshed.
- ❑ The investor considers that it is key to strike a balance between the best available solutions and the financial capacity of the beneficiary. The rapid development of technology can always provide new and better solutions. However, the investment made fully covered the beneficiary's current needs.

## Context

The Hajšek farm is located in the valley of Dravinja in the north-eastern Slovenia. With 100 ha of agricultural land of which 80 ha fields and 20 ha of permanent meadows, the size of the farm holding is above Slovenian average.

Andrej Hajšek took over the farm from his parents 27 years ago. At that time the farm production was mixed; the farm had dairy cows, male bovine animals, pigs and vineyards. Over the years he began to specialise in milk production and secured two full time jobs for himself and his wife.

Fodder for the animals is produced on own agricultural land surfaces. As the production of milk was gradually increasing, the capacities of the existing cowshed were not sufficient, although they had been expanded and modernized about 20 years ago. Before investing in this project, the farm had on average 70 dairy cows with an annual production of 600 000 litres of milk.

Andrej Hajšek closely follows technology developments and visited many places in Europe and wider to learn about different farming practices. Farming to him is a way of life and he is always looking for the ways of how to improve conditions for the animals and ease the farm work. Five years ago he invested in the first milking robot. A decision on investing into a new cowshed matured some time and was linked to careful planning.

## Objectives

The farm holding decided to optimise the farm potentials and to create conditions for increase of the milk production and improvement of the farm work processes.

The project objectives were:

- to increase the space for dairy cows and improve their wellbeing by constructing a new cowshed;
- to improve and ease the preparation/mixing of fodder;
- to improve the management of milking processes with the use of information and communication technology.

## Activities

The project was prepared with the support of an agricultural advisor and a specialist for animal nutrition who supported key decisions on technological and technical solutions regarding the construction and equipment of the cowshed. He also provided support regarding the animal nutrition plans. Careful planning of the production and financing of the investment had been

made before a decision on taking part in the RDP measure was reached.

The project investment comprised:

- Construction of a new cowshed for dairy cows
- Supply and installation of the cowshed equipment
- Supply and activation of ICT equipment for management of the building and production
- Purchase of mobile equipment

The new cowshed in the size of 42 m x 45 m was built for free-range farming. Besides the central construction made of concrete wood is used as predominant construction material. A part of the roof ridge is covered with transparent panels which allow the sunlight and air to enter the building.



In the production part there are 130 sleeping stalls. The new cowshed also accommodates 20 sleeping stalls for the cows in dry period. 4 x 15 m space is used for the nursery using deep litter housing system. Cow neck shackles are made of glass fiber and not of metal as it is most common.

Careful thought was given to ensuring appropriate conditions for air circulation: the cowshed is built on pillars. There are no fixed walls between these pillars; instead, curtains that can be opened and closed were installed. This allows adapting to weather conditions. The roof ridge can also be open. Ventilators are installed on the ceiling. The interior equipment includes a misting system which allows cooling of animals during hot days.

Investment in equipment comprised eight igloos for calves, a cattle hoof trimming table, a self-propelled mixer feeder wagon and a brusher/sweeper for cleaning of the yard. ICT equipment includes cameras and a computer needed for (remote) control of the milking robots.

Special attention regarding hygiene was paid to moving of dairy cows from the old to new cowshed in order to prevent transmitting on of any infections.

## Main Results

The project secured the conditions for a gradual increase of the dairy cow herd. The new cowshed now accommodates about 100 dairy cows. The production of milk is gradually increasing to about 1 million litres annually. The objective is to increase production to 1.2 million litres.

Wellbeing of the cattle significantly improved. The new cowshed is now used only for dairy cows. It is much brighter and better ventilated than the old one. The animals can move freely; each one has its own sleeping stall. The new equipment decreases the chances for occurrence of injuries. The old cowshed is now used for the young cattle and cows in dry period.

Outside the project the farm invested in two milking robot that are installed in the new cowshed. The purchase and instalment of ICT equipment increased control of the milking process. The data are stored electronically and always available. In case of deficiencies in the operation of milking robots, the farmer gets alert over the phone. Working conditions improved.

For 10 years the milk has been supplied to a dairy in neighbouring Austria. The investment also contributed to provision of milk quality. Crop rotation is used in production of the animal fodder.

## Key Lessons

A decision for each investment should be well thought in advance from several aspects. Personal aspirations, the vision of the farm holding and capabilities including financial ability played an important role in this example.

The project idea has been maturing for about seven years. It was important to explore both technological as well as market aspects of the investment. The farmer consulted competent professionals before taking key decisions.

According to investor, there are always things that could be done better, however one needs to take into account financial aspects. He is sure the new developments will provide new and better solutions. At present, the decisions taken proved appropriate.

*“Like in any other business and in life, it is important to have a goal accompanied with energy, strength and courage to pursue and realise it. On the other hand, one also has to be aware of own limits. Detailed planning, permanent anticipation of possible risk and developing solutions for their mitigation is necessary.”*

*Andrej Hajšek*



## Additional sources of information

n/a