

SLOVENIA

Entry of skilled/younger farmers

Location

Slovenske Konjice

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P2 – Competitiveness

Measure

M06 – Farm & business
Development

M04 - Investments in
physical assets

M16 – Cooperation

Funding (EUR)

M6 - Total budget 52 203

EAFRD 36 000

National/Regional 9 000

Private 7 202

M4 - Total budget 504 359

EAFRD 154 997

National/Regional 51 666

Private 297 697

M16 - Total budget 758 091

EAFRD 233.020

National/Regional 77 673

Private 447 398 (joint farms)

Project duration

2015 – 2019

Project promoter

Matjaž Vrhovšek

Contact

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A dairy farm combined three RDP supported operations to increase and modernise milk production and secure one full-time job.

Summary

The beneficiary Matjaž Vrhovšek combined three RDP-supported operations to increase and modernise milk production on his farm and secure one full-time job.



The project supported the construction of a cattle shed, purchase of a breeding heifer, and acquisition of agricultural machinery through a collective investment that was made in cooperation with a neighbouring farm.

Results

One full-time job was created for the young farm holder.

The new, larger cattle shed enables the farmer to breed 58 dairy cows and 51 heifers and weanlings. It has significantly improved animal welfare.

A new milking robot reduced physical work and gave the cows more freedom to determine when they are milked.

The investment in modern, diverse and specialised agricultural machinery helped to make the farm's operations in fields and meadows more efficient and better quality. This has improved the standard of fodder produced.

Finally, the shared investment helped to reduce running costs and meant that the new machinery was used more.

Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ The young farmer decided to make the investment following consultations with an agricultural advisor, who supported the farmer through the entire process, from preparation to implementation and reporting. This support was extremely useful, in particular with regard to understanding the funding call for proposals and meeting its requirements.
- ❑ Control over the investment, both in terms of timing and finance is crucial. In this particular case, a delay in construction resulted in additional costs.

Context

Poharci is a 32 ha dairy farm located in a hilly part of the Municipality of Slovenske Konjice in Slovenia.

Matjaž Vrhovšek took over the farm from his parents in 2015. He saw an opportunity to increase milk production through a joint investment in new equipment with a neighbouring dairy farm.

Supported by agricultural advisors, Mr Vrhovšek prepared three applications for RDP support. These included *M6.1 start-up support for young farmers* (2015), *M 4.1. support for investments in farm holdings* for construction of the new cow barn, and a collective investment in mechanisation (2017).

Objectives

The objectives of these investments were to:

- increase the breeding capacity of dairy cows and improve the animals' welfare;
- replace outdated agricultural machinery and modernise dairy production; and
- rationalise the use of human resources and secure at least one full-time job on the farm.

Activities

The farm carried out three investments:

- Construction of a silo for breeding dairy cows, and purchase of a breeding heifer and ICT equipment;
- construction, reconstruction, and extension of the cattle shed and its equipment, including installing a silo and a water tank; and
- a collective investment in agricultural machinery.

Start-up support for young farmers (granted in 2015), was used to construct a silo for breeding dairy cows and to purchase a backpack mower, a computer and a breeding heifer.

The new cattle shed saw four barns joined into one building. The investment enabled all the necessary equipment to be purchased, including feeding and watering equipment, equipment for placing cows and manure removal, and a ventilation system.

The installation of the milking robot was an important part of the investment and passed off without problem.

Mr Vrhovšek and the neighbouring farm jointly purchased machinery that was needed to work on the fields and

meadows, including tractors, rakes, a hoeing machine, trailers, a muck spreader, a seeder, a reversible plough, and a pallet fork.



“This investment would not be possible without the support of the RDP. Also, the entire process would not be possible without the professional support of the agricultural advisors who always provided sound and consistent information. In my view, everyone who intends to invest in farm modernisation, should not hesitate to use the available support. Good planning is important, as well as some perseverance. One should not give up but rather look for alternatives.”

Matjaž Vrhovšek, project holder

Main Results

- All three investments contributed to the expansion and modernisation of the dairy farm and to lower operating costs;
- The farmer was able to farm full time;
- The new, larger cattle shed enables the farmer to breed 58 dairy cows and 51 heifers and weanlings. It has significantly improved animal welfare. Modern placing equipment, feeding technology and improved ventilation resulted in less stress for the animals and increased the quality and amount of milk produced;
- The farm owner is cooperating closely with an animal nutrition specialist who provides advice and support;
- A milking robot reduced physical work and gave the cows more freedom to determine when they are milked. New ICT gives the farmer data on the condition and performance of each cow, e.g. on how much milk they produce, their movements, their nutrition,, etc.
- The investment in specialised agricultural machinery helped to make work in fields and meadows more efficient and better quality. This has improved the standard of fodder produced. Finally, the shared investment helped to reduce running costs and meant more used for the new machinery was used more.

Key lessons

- The young farmer decided to make the investment following consultations with an agricultural advisor, who supported the farmer through the entire process, from preparation to implementation and reporting. This support was extremely useful, in particular with regard to understanding the funding call for proposals and meeting its requirements.
- Control over the investment, both in terms of timing and finance is crucial. In this particular case, a delay in

construction resulted in additional costs for the loans and guarantees taken from the bank.

- With hindsight, the cattle shed could have been extended further and a second milking robot could have been purchased.
- The farmer's primary school-age children have become more interested in the milking process as a result of the introduction of the robot and computer technology. They have also become skilled at reading charts and graphs on milk production.



Additional sources of information

n/a