



CAP support helps a young Slovak farmer pursue apiculture

An entrepreneurial young farmer develops a prosperous bee farm by making use of his multiple skills and experiences.

EAFRD-funded projects

Location: Dolný Liptov, Slovakia

Programming period: 2014-2020

Priority: P2 - Competitiveness

Focus Area: Entry of skilled/younger farmers

Measures: M06 - Farm & business development

Funding:	Total budget	50 000 (EUR)
	EAFRD	37 500 (EUR)
	National/Regional	12 500 (EUR)

Timeframe: 30/01/2018 - 31/12/2022

Project promoter: Roman Martinovič

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Summary

The project helped a young farmer establish a small-scale beekeeping business of 160 hives in the region of Dolný Liptov in Slovakia. The CAP beneficiary (Mr Roman Martinovič) established seven apiaries, created facilities for honey extraction and a workshop for beekeeping tasks. Together with fellow beekeepers, he contributed to the creation of the 'Poctivô z Liptova' brand, which helps enhance the value of the brand's products and services on offer.

Project results

- › Roman now manages some 160 beehives across seven registered apiaries in the Dolný Liptov region. He is a producer of high-quality mountain flower and honeydew honey, along with other bee products.
- › The bee farm generates profits and has become a primary source of income for the young farmer.
- › In addition to the job of the young farmer, the project has created one other job in agriculture.
- › By selling directly from on-farm premises, the supplier-consumer chain is short.

Key lessons and recommendations

- › The success of the project was facilitated by a relatively large community of customers and supporters that the farmer cultivated, both through social networking and by linking up with the tourist sector of the region.
- › For the farmer, accomplishing the overall process of project implementation independently without the support of an intermediary organisation was a most interesting and satisfying experience. It allowed him to maintain authenticity of his ideas throughout project implementation.



Context

Roman Martinovič trained in animal husbandry and took advantage of CAP funding opportunities for young farmers to realise his vocation of professional beekeeping.

In addition to his education in livestock husbandry and a beekeeping certificate, Mr. Martinovič had experience in marketing, informal education and experiential activities. By combining these skills and experiences, he created a successful business model. For example, he knew that to be successful he needed to create a story and add further value to honey as the primary product. He also appreciated that the very clean, natural, pesticide-free environment of the farm's location, would represent a distinct advantage for producing the highest possible quality of honey.

These characteristics also present suitable conditions for implementing the farmer's wider vision of gradually expanding and diversifying into other areas of farming, agrotourism, environmental activities and more in future.



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Objectives

The CAP funded project focused on beekeeping and represented the first phase of a larger plan of establishing a farm with mixed livestock. The main objectives were to establish a sustainable and commercially viable beekeeping farm as a means to start an entrepreneurial activity for a young farmer. The farm was to become the primary source of income for the young farmer, ensuring its long-term sustainability and potential for further development.

Activities

This CAP funding helped purchase materials, cover initial costs, acquire bees, and other related expenses.

The project's activities involved the following:

- Establishing the beekeeping farm. The beneficiary established seven registered apiaries, each capable of housing 20-100 beehives. Electric fencing was installed around the free-standing beehives to safeguard them from brown bears inhabiting the area.
- Building facilities for honey extraction and various beekeeping activities. This infrastructure included a honey extraction room, storage spaces, a honey packaging area, a beekeeping carpentry workshop and staff facilities.
- Promoting and selling the produced honey and other beekeeping products through direct sales from on-farm premises. This included engaging with the wider local and regional community, building customer relations, maintaining business relationships through social networking and tapping into the tourist market of the region.
- Enhancing the value of the product and services offered by collaborating with fellow beekeepers. Roman played a significant role in establishing the 'Pochtivô z Liptova' brand and developed a programme to strengthen the connections between himself as a beekeeper/producer and his customer base.
- Furthering his agricultural education by attending accredited courses supported by the Rural Development Programme. These courses were specifically tailored for individuals involved in projects funded under the specific sub-measure relevant to the project.
- Developing educational activities. This included the implementation of various educational programmes and excursions with a particular focus on children, youth, families and schools. The aim was to emphasise the distinctiveness of the work on the farm, often incorporating a personal storyline into each product that leaves the farm.



Main results

- Thanks to the financial support received, the young farmer managed to establish a farm within a five-year time span (2018-2022), primarily focusing on beekeeping.
- Roman now manages over 160 beehives across seven registered apiaries in the Dolný Liptov region. He is a producer of high-quality mountain flower and honeydew honey, along with other bee products such as beeswax, propolis and pollen.
- By adhering to good farming practices and efficient management, the bee farm has achieved several key milestones:
 - It is capable of generating profits.
 - It has become the primary source of income for the young farmer.
 - The project has achieved long-term sustainability and has prospects for further farm development.
- In addition to providing employment for the farmer himself, the project has created one other job in agriculture. By selling directly from his premises, the young farmer has contributed to shortening the supplier-consumer chain.
- The project has a positive impact on the local economy. In addition, beekeeping also supports biodiversity, contributing positively to environmental conservation.
- The young farmer has overcome the initial challenges of establishing a farm and is now planning to expand into other livestock to offer additional interesting products to his customer community. Currently, he is launching poultry and rabbit farming and preparing for cattle, goat, and sheep farming.

Key lessons and recommendations

- The success of the project was facilitated by a relatively large community of customers and supporters that the farmer cultivated, both through social networking and linking up with the tourist sector of the region.
- For the farmer, accomplishing the overall process of project implementation independently without the support of an intermediary organisation was a most interesting and satisfying experience. It allowed him to maintain the authenticity of his ideas throughout project implementation. Most importantly, Roman feels that the results reflect exactly what he had put into the project with his heart and mind. Therefore, his recommendation to other applicants facing similar challenges is not to be afraid of handling the process independently.

“While Slovakia undoubtedly ranks among the leaders of the European Union in this regard, we still have a long way to go to reach the bee population levels of thirty years ago. There are also new challenges that beekeepers must face today. Therefore, it’s excellent that the EU supports the development of beekeeping, including young aspiring honey farmers, as part of its programmes. It’s an honour for me that, thanks to this support, I was able to become a part of our Slovak and, together with them, our European beekeeping family through the realisation of my project. And for me, this is just the beginning.”

Roman Martinovič, project promoter



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