

Kudłaty Zakątek livestock farm modernisation

Livestock farm diversification project in Poland takes advantage of commercial opportunities, providing educational and therapeutic services, while enhancing sustainability.

ERDF-funded projects

Location: Żory, Górny Śląsk, Poland

Programming period: 2014–2020

Priority: P2 – Competitiveness

Focus Area: Farm performance, restructuring & modernisation

Measures: M06 – Farm & business development

Funding: Total budget: 21 081 (EUR)

ERDF: 8 942 (EUR)

National/Regional: 5 112 (EUR)

Private/Own: 7 027 (EUR)

Timeframe: 27/01/2020 – 25/05/2022

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Summary

A small family farm located on the outskirts of the town of Żory in Upper Silesia is engaged in rearing traditional Scottish Highland cows. Thanks to the funds obtained from the CAP, new machinery has been purchased which increased productivity and reduced production costs.

Project results

- The farm's overall productivity, including that of the cow herd, increased by 30%; sales of meat and linseed oil also increased.
- Fuel consumption has decreased by 70%, while the consumption of plant protection products decreased by 30%.
- Applying the no-tillage technique helps to prevent soil drought and restore soil biodiversity.

- 300 people have visited the farm to participate in educational and therapeutic programmes.

Key lessons and recommendations

It is important for farmers to opt for environmentally friendly solutions that serve the common good; to this end they need to be open to cooperation with different people and institutions.

Context

Kudłaty zakątek is a family farm in Upper Silesia. Since 2018, the farm has been engaged in the extensive production of Scottish Highland cows, a breed that is well-adapted to a free-range life. These animals mainly feed on roughage, so they produce fewer greenhouse gases compared to the faster-growing, high-yielding cattle of large-scale farm production. The farm is self-sufficient in animal feed, and the meat obtained from the cattle (who are fattened on green fodder and natural feeds) is undoubtedly healthier and tastier.



The cows of the original Scottish Highland breed are kept in a herd (allowing for natural social interaction between animals) in a free-range system throughout the year. At present, there are 26 heads of cattle on the farm, in addition to equine animals, sheep, goats and chickens. They have adequate housing, into which they are brought at night, and access to an open-air run every day of the year.



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'Jantarol' golden flax is grown on the farm. This traditional variety of flax produces an oil which, when cold-pressed, contains the optimum composition of OMEGA 3, 6, and 9 acids. Flax cultivation is entirely natural, as the seeds for sowing are treated with basalt meal and not with chemical plant protection products. Around this crop, the farm maintains areas that offer a suitable habitat for bees and other insects, including bee apiaries, insect houses and melliferous plants, as well as a pond left especially for frogs and newts.

This type of animal rearing and nature preservation is in accordance with the philosophy of the farming family who manage the land: they want their production activities to respect and preserve the environment. Further, they shape their educational activities around those principles: showing their many visitors how farming can indeed be respectful and balanced.

Obtaining funds from the 2014-2020 Rural Development Programme enabled the family to increase the profitability and competitiveness of their farm in the most environmentally and climate-friendly way possible.

Objectives

The aims of this project included:

- The purchase of machinery to increase productivity and competitiveness on the farm in an environmentally friendly way.
- The purchase of animals and the further adaptation of farm facilities to provide environmental, educational and therapeutic services.

Activities

Activities implemented at the farm included:

- Purchasing a Jarmet P510 weeder to be used for mechanical weed control and for harrowing meadows. It removes old turf and improves the aeration of the soil.
- Purchasing a Samasz Samba 200-disc mower and a Class volto 45 windrower. This equipment has enabled the farmers to gather more roughage.
- Purchasing more Scottish Highland cows: five suckler cows (including those in calf) and a breeding bull.
- Purchasing horses and other animals suitable for animal therapy. The farm owners bought and gave a home to rescued animals, suitable for therapy and for making the farm more attractive and interesting for visitors.
- Upgrading the buildings and the farmyard to meet health and safety requirements, thus enabling larger groups to attend educational workshops, and to provide appropriate accommodation for the new animals.

In addition, the farm cooperates with several state institutions, such as the Śląski Agricultural Advisory Centre (ŚODR), the Agency for Restructuring and Modernisation of Agriculture (ARMA) as a paying agency, Municipal Cultural Centre (GOK), the Town Cultural Centres (MOKs), educational institutions, foundations, associations and regional media, etc. Cooperation with these institutions allowed for developing and delivering training courses and educational tours, holding workshops on the farm, and increasing environmental awareness among children, young people, farmers and the local community.

Main results

- Thanks to the project, the overall performance of the farm has improved. Its productivity increased, including that of the cow herd, by 30%, and sales of meat and linseed oil through RHD [Agricultural Retail Trade System] increased as well.

- Thanks to the purchase of the machinery the farm has now been able to:
 - ensure good quality natural feeds for a larger herd.
 - reduce fuel consumption by 70%. The Samba Samasz disc mower spreads a swath of grass immediately after mowing, which makes it easier to dry it, while the Class windrower reduces the number of tractor passes from four to one due to the strong aeration during spreading.
 - reduce by 30% the consumption of plant protection products by using the purchased weeder to mechanically remove weeds and improve soil aeration.
- The farm's eco-system is now better protected, since the no-tillage approach prevents soil drought and restores biodiversity in the soil.
- Intercropping (which maintains a protective cover during the winter period on arable land) prevents the loss of organic carbon, and prevents nitrate contamination in the groundwater.
- 300 people have visited the farm to participate in their educational and therapeutic programmes.

Key lessons and recommendations

- Farmers need to opt for environmentally friendly solutions that serve the common good; for this they need to be open to cooperation with different people and institutions.
- The most valuable lesson learnt from implementing this project has been that of more fully appreciating the value of the visitors, their encouragement and support, which has given the farm owners great satisfaction and has motivated them to apply for more EU funds to develop their visitor offer further.

Quotes

"Great place, great people, beloved pets! Keeping my fingers crossed for further development!"

Visitor to farm

Additional information:

www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100062945065468

www.facebook.com/RTKab/videos/960851478451657

