

## EIP Operational Group improves Polish farmer positions in vegetable value chains

CAP funds help increase profit margins for farmers by automating to improve supplies of quality fresh vegetables.

### EAFRD-funded projects

**Location:** Zamość, Poland

**Programming period:** 2014-2020

**Priority:** P2. Competitiveness

**Focus Area:** 2A. Farm performance, restructuring & modernisation

**Measures:** M16 - Cooperation

<b>Funding:</b>	Total budget	97 891 (EUR)
	EAFRD	48 636 (EUR)
	National/Regional	27 799 (EUR)
	Private/own	21 456 (EUR)

**Timeframe:** 13/07/2022 - 13/07/2023

**Project promoter:** Zamojska Farma\*

**Contact:** Aleksandra Matwiejuk

### Summary

Automating vegetable packaging and sorting processes presents advantages for food providers and consumers. Automated systems optimise the handling of fresh produce, ensuring that products are packaged swiftly, with high quality. This efficiency minimises waste and allows businesses to meet demands for fresh vegetables. Short supply chains for vegetables help to strengthen customer loyalty further and have environmental benefits.

This CAP-funded EIP Operational Group (OG) project was fronted by a young Polish farmer with entrepreneurial flair and a passion for his potato crops. The 'Zamojska Farma' OG members joined forces with a shared vision: to take advantage of the potential offered by automating packing and sorting processes to address labour shortage risks, as well as shorten supply chains for nutritious local farm products (potatoes, sweetcorn and cauliflower). By increasing farmers' incomes and promoting direct sales channels, the project improved the economic health of the five local farms involved.



### Project results

Benefits from the CAP funding included:

- 40% higher potato selling price.
- 15% increase in labour productivity from higher efficiency automated potato packing and sorting.
- 20% reduction in operating costs by reducing the need for intermediaries.
- increased number of consumers (from 50 to 800) thanks to the online shop.
- reduction in the time it takes for potatoes to be delivered from the grower to the consumer - among other things: possibility of buying the products directly on the farm or delivered to the consumer in about 2 working days.
- improving the quality and freshness of agricultural products by shortening the supply chain.
- increased customer satisfaction through direct sales and better control over product quality.
- increased consumer awareness of local food and sustainable agriculture.

The project is being continued through a new OG centred on farm sales, such as the use of farm vending machines to distribute agricultural products 24/7.

\*The project promoter/beneficiary is an EIP-AGRI Operational Group.  
([https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/operational-groups\\_en](https://eu-cap-network.ec.europa.eu/operational-groups_en))





## Key lessons and recommendations

High-quality products can differentiate farmers in competitive markets and justify premium pricing.

Engaging directly with consumers allows farmers to capture higher profit margins while building brand loyalty.

Thanks to modern machinery, the OG member farms have been significantly streamlined, increasing labour efficiency and improving product quality.

A shorter supply chain has made it possible to deliver high-quality agricultural products directly from producer to consumer, which supports the regional economy.

The project has contributed to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and resource consumption, supporting the objectives of EU climate action commitments.

## Context

Automation of vegetable packaging and sorting processes in Europe presents advantages for both food providers and consumers. Automated systems can optimise the handling of fresh produce, ensuring that products are packaged swiftly while maintaining high quality.

This efficiency minimises waste and allows businesses to meet growing demands for fresh vegetables in a timely manner.

Consumers benefit from automated packaging that can adapt to fit various product sizes and types, offering tailored solutions that cater to consumer preferences. Enhanced traceability features can also ensure that consumers receive clear information on sourcing and handling practices.

Consequently, the integration of automation into vegetable packaging serves as a tool for improving overall satisfaction with farm products in the food supply chain. Short supply chains for vegetables help to strengthen customer loyalty further and have environmental benefits.

In potato production, a key challenge is the crop's vulnerability, which benefits from short supply chain models ensuring freshness and high product quality. This CAP-funded EIP Operational Group (OG) project was fronted by a young Polish farmer with entrepreneurial flair and a passion for his potato crops.

The 'Zamojska Farma' OG members (Marcin Gryn, Ireneusz Herc, Iwona Herc, Adam Herc, and Marek Clurysek) joined forces with a shared vision: to take advantage of the potential offered by automating packing and sorting processes to address labour shortage risks, as well as shorten supply chains for nutritious local farm products (potatoes, sweetcorn and cauliflower).

## Objectives

The main OG objective was to establish a short supply chain by a group of five farmers for the distribution and sale of fresh, healthy vegetables. Specific objectives focused on:

- increasing farmers' income by strengthening their position in the value chain.
- increasing the efficiency of agricultural product distribution by shortening the supply chain.
- automation of packaging and sorting processes.
- promoting fresh, local produce to consumers.

## Activities

Preparatory work on the project included improving knowledge about enabling factors to improve product quality via optimised vegetable varieties, planting material, agrotechnology, fertilisers, and plant protection.

The automation process involved the purchase and implementation of modern equipment to wash, sort, and weigh vegetables, as well as packaging in smaller portions, tailored to customer needs.

Storage, distribution and other key value chain logistics were improved, providing better customer services. An online sales system was launched to further increase the possibilities of direct sales to help retain maximum profit within the farming community.

OG findings were disseminated online, through media coverage, and during participation at OG networking events.



## Main results

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- 15% increase in labour productivity from higher efficiency automated potato packing and sorting.
- 20% reduction in operating costs by reducing the need for intermediaries.
- increased number of consumers (from 50 to 800) thanks to the online shop.
- reduction in the time it takes for potatoes to be delivered from the grower to the consumer, thanks to the possibility of buying the products directly on the farm, or delivery to the consumer taking about two working days.
- improving the quality and freshness of agricultural products by shortening the supply chain.
- increased customer satisfaction through direct sales and better control over product quality.
- increased consumer awareness of local food and sustainable agriculture.

The project is being continued through the OG 'I buy in the countryside', which seeks new solutions to streamline the entire sales process on the farm, such as the use of farm vending machines for the distribution of agricultural products 24/7.

## Key lessons and recommendations

Thanks to CAP funding for modern machinery, the farms have been significantly streamlined, increasing labour efficiency and improving product quality.

High-quality products can differentiate farmers in competitive markets and justify premium pricing.

Engaging directly with consumers allows farmers to capture higher profit margins while building brand loyalty

A shorter supply chain has made it possible to deliver high-quality agricultural products directly from producer to consumer, which supports the regional economy.

The project has contributed to reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and resource consumption, supporting the objectives of the EU climate action commitments.



## Quote

*"From the field straight to your table, freshness and quality without middlemen!"*

Zamojska Farma

## Additional information:

Project website:

<https://zamojskafarma.pl>

Project on YouTube:

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGbfTqQM\\_yY&t=20s&ab\\_channel=EUCAPNetwork](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGbfTqQM_yY&t=20s&ab_channel=EUCAPNetwork)

Project on Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/share/p/dDSihqeGv2ChTHuK](https://www.facebook.com/share/p/dDSihqeGv2ChTHuK)